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FROM THE EDITOR

Does anyone else notice the subtle changes in atmosphere that creep into your home as we head further into autumn? There's the drop in temperature, of course – that moment when you confirm that yes, you are a bit chilly, and begin the debate with your family or housemates about whether you can justify putting the central heating on just yet. But there's also a change in light: everything feels a bit like it's been washed with a grey tint, and the darkest rooms in your home become even gloomier. However, as autumn's biggest fan, that's not to say any of this is a negative. What it signals is that it's time to make changes to your home, from looking at your lighting scheme to breaking out your comfiest throws and fluffiest slippers. It's time to get cosy.

Cosiness is at the heart of my favourite feature in this issue, covering all the ways to get your home ready for the season ahead in style. 'Hunker down' (p.68) guides you through the key things you need to consider for your bedroom, bathroom and garden, from buildable textures to practical touches – including a small but mighty fire pit to help you extend the use of your outdoor space through autumn (and maybe even winter, if you're brave enough). It'll help you create that magical feeling that makes this season, in my humble opinion, the very best of all.

But this isn't just a love letter to autumn, and there's plenty more in this issue to inspire you, from advice on renovating a period home (p.121) to tips on creating a luxurious en suite (p.88). For the practical-minded among you, we've also rounded up the latest and best radiator designs on page 145 – because there's no use packing your house with cushions and throws if you haven't nailed the heating element, after all.

And, of course, our house tours, which are always so exciting to see each issue. I hope you find them as inspiring as we do.

Enjoy the issue, preferably curled up on the sofa with a huge mug of tea and a flickering candle or two – that's where I'll be for the foreseeable.

Ellen

ELLEN FINCH
DEPUTY EDITOR
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Meet the team

Get to know the people who bring you *Real Homes* magazine with a monthly question. This time: what's been your best, most memorable Halloween outfit?

Alison Jones
Assistant editor
'My brother forgot to tell me his party was no longer fancy dress, and I turned up as a drowned sailor off the Titanic.'

Amelia Smith
Acting style editor
'I'm a witch every year without fail – even if that means just sitting at work in a witch's hat!'

Emily Smith
Senior art editor
'I hate dressing up, so I just dig out something black and stick a spider on my cheek. Maybe one day I'll embrace it...'

Annie Collyer
Digital shopping editor
'Wednesday Addams! With my dark hair and eye bags, I just need a black collared dress!'

Camille Dubuis-Welch
Digital editor
'For Halloween in Bologna one year, we wore gorgeous Venetian masks from a friend's Venice trip.'

PHOTOGRAPH **ELLIE MAYALL**
ILLUSTRATIONS **THINGS AIMEE MADE**

Time to give the big light a makeover

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INSIDE track

Get the scoop on new design ideas, must-have products and looks you'll love...

Oriental oasis

Indulge in the understated luxury and pure elegance of Japonica. Think Japanese-inspired sculptural lighting, accents of bamboo and brass, and bold prints that create an instant statement. The latest oriental collection from Habitat includes soft pinks, vibrant blues and crane motifs for a space that's exotic yet cosy.

Kayleigh brass drinks trolley, £125; Aoki bamboo shelved floor lamp, £110; Kiso brass and opal pendant light, £95; Hendricks four-seater sofa in charcoal, £1,200; Cole boucle and velvet accent chairs, both £130; metal wire coffee table in gold, £200; Agnes flatweave cotton rug, £60, all Habitat

Eastern promise

Add finishing touches with a Far-East flourish that combines elegance and style

Japonica faux trailing ivy, £16

Japonica cocktail shaker, £10

Japonica metal nibble bowl, £4

Achille ash table lamp, £65

Japonica Crane Placement double duvet set, £31

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FEATURE **AMELIA SMITH**

Hand made artforms

Uniting pottery and lighting, Mullan Lighting is an organic and sustainable Northern Ireland-based brand that puts skilled craftsmanship at its centre. Local ceramicists use age-old techniques to create made-to-order, one-of-a-kind pieces with a modern twist.

Tansy pendant, from £126.72

Sakura double wall light, £232.32

Pera ceramic pendant, £221.76

Cassia table lamp, £411.84

Style school

Journalist, blogger, author of Mad About the House and all-round interiors guru Kate Watson Smyth is launching an online interior styling course. Whether you're redecorating your home or trying to revive a rented flat, Kate shares her wealth of experience in bite-size video lessons so you can get the most from your space. 'Guide to finding your own interior design style' launches 29 September, £127, Create Academy

SAVE V SPEND

Add texture, storage and style to your bedside with these rattan and wood designs

Terran bedside table, £190, Sweetpea & Willow

Little Willow bedside table, £295, Loaf

ECO CHOICE

Rent a sofa

If you're renting, you don't want to fork out on an expensive sofa in case it doesn't work with your next pad. While the idea of buying a cheaper, somewhat disposable sofa is tempting, it's no good for our planet. To bid farewell to the lure of fast homeware, Sofology has launched the Virtue collection: a sofa, armchair and footstool that can be rented in six-, 12- or 18-month contracts. Every element is recycled or recrafted, so you get a stylish, comfy, guilt-free sofa for less. Genius! From £65 a month for a three-seater sofa, Sofology

Yoga at home

If your living room is still your preferred yoga studio, even with lockdown lifted, a stylish yoga mat is in order. This Berber-style design looks good enough to leave out all the time – so you can get your downward dog on as you're waiting for dinner to cook. DOIY Berber-style yoga mat, £39.95, The Joy Edit

Autumnal wreaths

Enliven your front door with the colours of the season for a warm welcome home

Midnight blue autumn harvest floral wreath, £25, Dibor

Burgundy eucalyptus wreath, £45, Home Luxe Co

Sunflower and pumpkin wreath, £12.99, Homesense

Pumpkin wreath, £31.99, We Love Seasons

Sculpd x Wool & the Gang planter kit, £65, Sculpd

Get your craft on

This kit from Sculpd and Wool & the Gang comes with everything you need to sculpt, paint and waterproof your plant pot, as well as the raffia cord to make the macramé basket. We love that every aspect is hands on, and an online tutorial video makes the process fun and straightforward.

DECORATE & COORDINATE

Dunelm has launched its first range of wallpapers and paint. Decorate & Coordinate hosts several collections – from exotic Jungle Luxe to cool Mid Century Modern – with accompanying floor and splashback tiles, and accessories. This Lena wallpaper and matched paint are from the Mid Century range, mixing retro patterns with modern colourways. Elements Lena grey wallpaper, £10 per roll, Dunelm

CELEBRATE THE SEASON

Spook up your home in style with these mystical pumpkin decorations from Lights4Fun. An elegant take on the classic orange pumpkin, these will bring an atmospheric glow to any corner of your home. Gold mercury LED glass pumpkin, £29.99; ceramic pumpkin light, £32.99; mini light-up ceramic pumpkin trio, £40.99, Lights4Fun

Fast fashion fix

We're all shopping smarter to help the planet, and these cushions do their bit. They're made by Casa Cubista using thread recycled from the fashion industry. Sold through Lusophile, a concept store stocking handmade, sustainable Porteguese brands, they come in an extra large size and three earthy colours, and cost £90.

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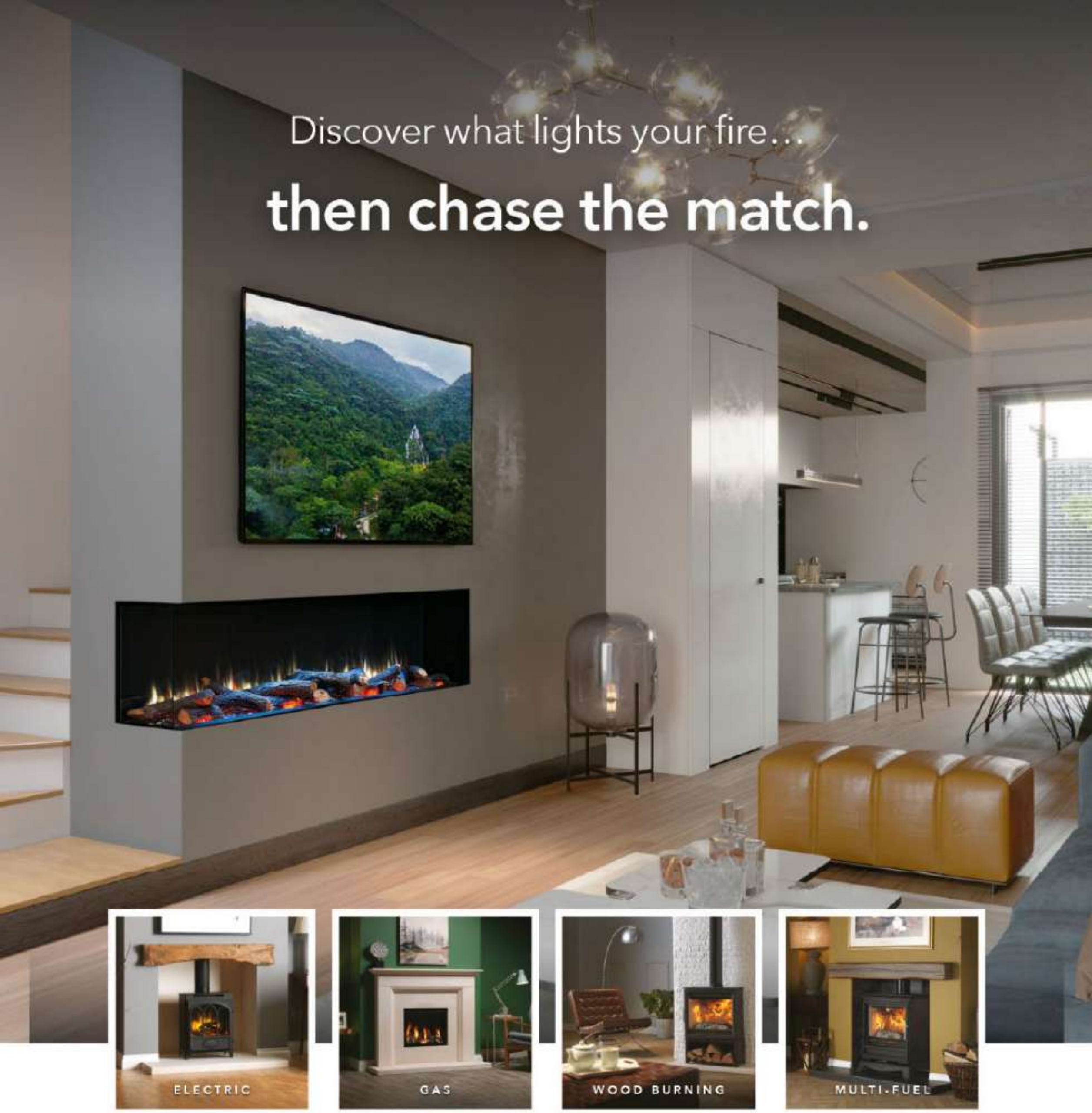
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Ninja Foodi 7.5l multicooker OP450UK £229.99, Very

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@coffeewithmegxo. As the queen of Halloween, we're heading to Meg's feed for all the spooky inspiration we need.

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TV storage cabinet, £95, Red Candy

Retro mini lion basket, £15.99, Bellybambino

Maileg storage baskets, £73.20 for two, Yoyo & Flo

CLEAN SWEEP

Need to restore a bit of law and order now the kids are back at school? From organising your pantry to toy storage solutions, our hub will have you cleaning up in no time. **realhomes.com/storage**

PHOTOGRAPH (TOP) KASIA FISZER

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THE BIG DEBATE

Would you ask for a discount?

Do you haggle for money off when hiring trades or buying goods? Our readers tell us

YES

'We always ask if people can give a discount; it's a nice little win'

Anu and Harri (@humblesidehomes) live in a 1960s detached house in the North East

'There's a saying here that "shy bairns get nowt" – which means if you don't ask, you don't get. We always try to ask for a discount. Renovating a house is expensive so we think it's good to haggle and try to get a bargain.

'We asked for a discount on the scaffolding when we painted our house and we got a reduction of £200. And we were able to get a heritage radiator that was pretty much brand new from Ebay. We offered £50 to buy it now, and they accepted. We Googled it and found that type of radiator sells for nearly £900, so that was fantastic. If people can give discounts, it's a nice little win for you, and the money saved goes to something else in the house.

'For our kitchen, we looked at what different companies were offering and used that to negotiate to get a few hundred pounds off. Having the figures to back things up – or being prepared to wait or go elsewhere – can all help. Asking for a discount can seem a bit scary, but sometimes it works. If they say no, they say no – you just pick up the conversation where you left it at the other price.

'We build up good relationships with people. We have tradespeople that do high quality work and we know we'll use them again, and they're willing to give us a fair price. Sometimes we'll give a nice tip just because they've done a good job.

'You just have to be a bit brave and ask when it comes to discounts. The better informed you are about prices elsewhere, the more you can use it to your advantage.'

NO

'I like a bargain but as a nation we're not natural hagglers. It's British politeness'

Sandra Donson (@nestfourteen), her partner, Matt, and their two daughters live in an Edwardian house in Nottingham

'I'd be embarrassed to ask for a discount. I think if someone's doing a job, that's what it's worth. If my employer asked if I could work for a bit less, I'd say no because that would be a pay cut – just as I wouldn't ask a hairdresser or taxi driver or anyone else who works for me for one. I used to do craft fairs and I'd get annoyed when people would ask me for a discount. I'd think, "I've spent time doing this and I know how much these things cost".

'We had a lovely builder who did our kitchen and we chose him because of the quality of his work. What he quoted was what we paid. He broke down the costs for us and if an item was too expensive I'd see that as my problem, not the builder's, and I'd just have to readjust and get something at a price we could afford. Most trades are self-employed so it wouldn't seem fair to ask them to take a pay cut, especially since Covid.

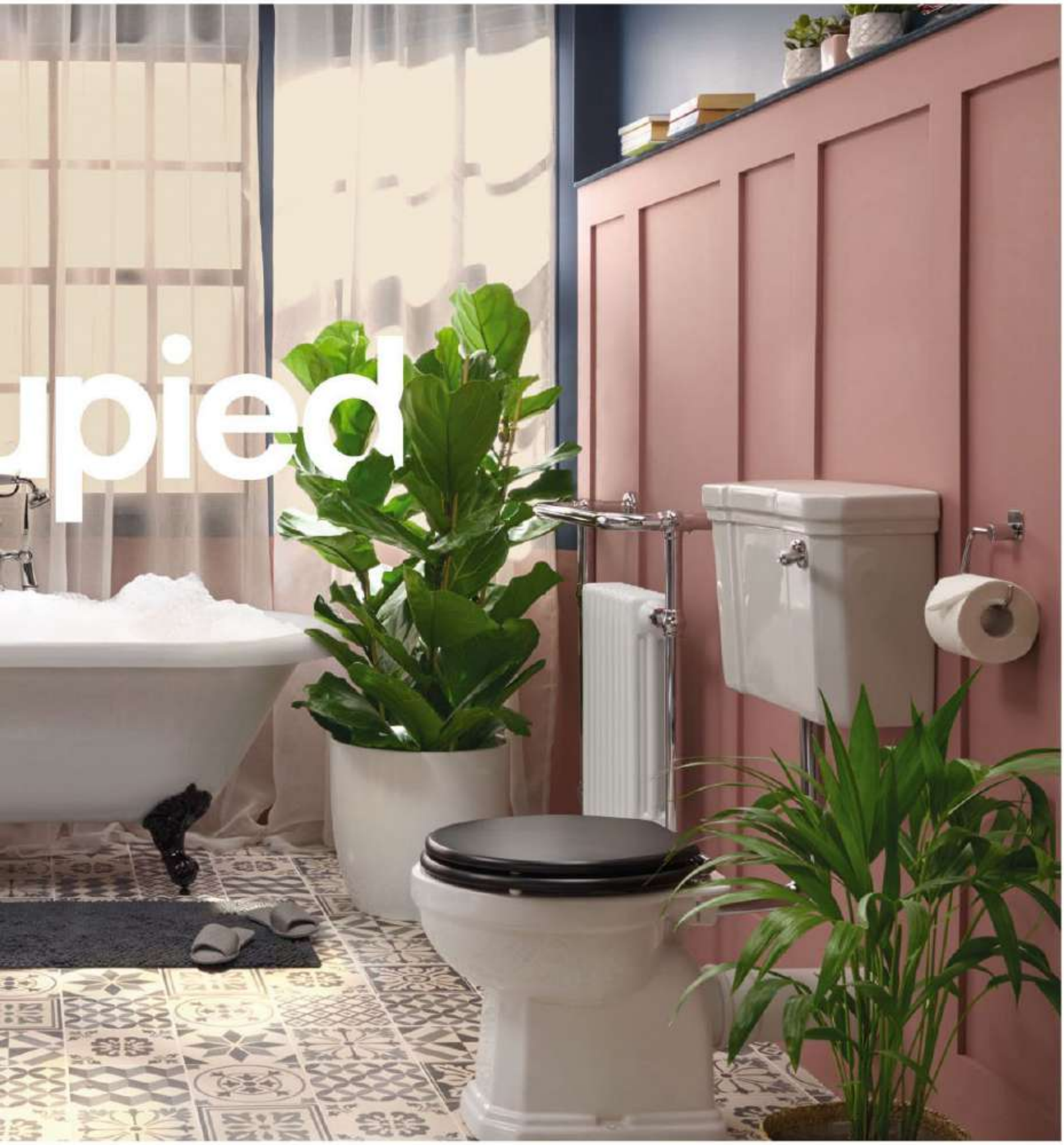
'I do like a bargain, but as a nation we're not natural hagglers. When I go on holiday I'm terrible. They give me a price and I think, "Okay". It's that British politeness. I like the information in front of me and then I can decide. I just feel uncomfortable haggling. It doesn't sit easy with me. I want to feel good when I'm buying something and for the person selling it to feel good about it. You don't want it to be awkward and come out feeling bruised.

'I think if people feel respected and their work valued, they'll do a better job, and in the long term it can benefit you.'

NEXT MONTH: HOW EARLY OR LATE DO YOU TAKE THE CHRISTMAS DECS DOWN?

FEATURE **ALISON JONES**

**Bathrooms are more than just sinks and showers.
Every tap, tile and texture to create your personal space.**



You can do it

EXTENDED 1930S SEMI

Bold & bright

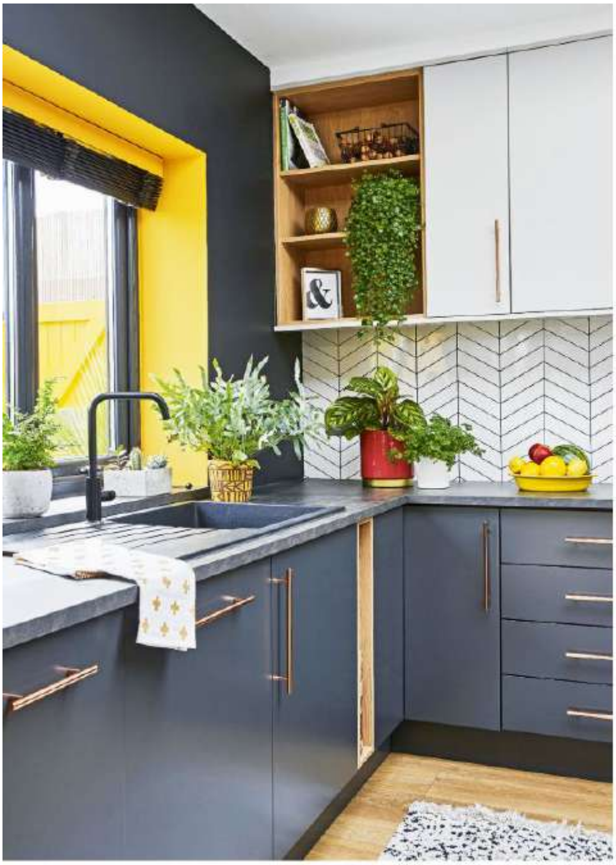
Aga and Andrew's can-do attitude and DIY skills turned a characterless house into a charming home

Profile

THE OWNERS
Photographer Aga Tomaszek (@thishousewemade), her partner, Andrew, a sound engineer and music producer, their daughter and dogs

THE PROPERTY
A three-bed 1930s semi in south Wales

PROJECT COST
£45,000



Left and below 'I designed the kitchen as I have a background in architecture and work as a photographer, which also allowed me to appreciate the importance of natural light,' says Aga. 'The skylight is an absolute game changer.'

Walls ***painted*** in La Plancha, Valspar.
Kitchen, DIY Kitchens.
Bar stools, Dunelm.
Pendant lights, Wayfair.
Splashback tiles, Ebay

Having rented ever since she left home for university, Aga Tomaszek had lived in all sorts of problematic houses. 'I lived in a new build long enough to know I didn't want to buy one, but I also rented a neglected 1930s home that had so much potential and I wished it was mine,' she says. 'I've been saving ever since I can remember and was finally able to buy my first home in 2018.' Aga and Andrew knew the area and their choice was based primarily on school catchment. 'We were desperate for our daughter to be able to walk to school. The second criteria was for the house to be south facing, and third that the garden be big enough to extend but not too big.'

The house was, as Aga describes it, a 'textbook granny pad' that hadn't changed much since it was built. The carpet and wallpaper was dated, the toilet was separate from the bathroom, there was no bathroom downstairs, and the kitchen was in a tiny 2x2m space. Her aim was to bring it into the 21st century and make it suitable for a small family and two professionals working from home. 'We're both creatives and it was important that we have a dedicated space where we could also bring clients,' says Aga. 'I'm a photographer and my partner is a sound engineering and music producer. His music crew and his studio clients always come round to listen to music or just have a drink after a day spent recording, so we needed a house that's great for entertaining as much as working into late hours.'

Aga combined her architecture background and her photographer's eye to help bring the couple's vision for the house together. They had builders knock through a wall in between the front and back reception rooms, then extended out by another 4.6 metres to give them an L-shape open-plan space that would contain their office, dining, living area and kitchen. At the rear, they installed four-metre-wide bi-fold doors, which illuminates the interiors with morning sunshine.

Once the shell was ready and plastered the couple took over the works. The kitchen was recommended to Aga by a colleague from the industry. 'It was manufactured by DIY Kitchens then installed and modified entirely by ourselves,' says Aga. 'When the island arrived the colour was all wrong – I almost had a heart attack! In hindsight, ordering the kitchen happened way too early for me, before I could picture the final vibe of the space. If I did it again I'd employ an interior designer to help me with the overall vision.'

Works took exactly nine months from the moment the couple got the keys to the day they moved in, just before Christmas 2018. Getting the interiors just right took a little longer. 'The polish came with time and oscillated around my love for plants – what started as one plant pot is now a real feature!' says Aga. 'The style just organically grew and started taking shape the moment all my favourite textures and colours crept in.'

Aga's dad was able to help out in the garden. 'We built the pergola and seating area and the grass was started from seedlings, which saved money,' she says. 'We ordered the composite boards for the decking directly from a local manufacturer, then learnt from YouTube how to build a base. It took some elbow grease, but nothing a DIY savvy person can't do! I chose the decking to be wood effect – I wanted the living room floor to visually continue into the garden, making it seem even more spacious in size.'

Aga admits that the couple did make some key decisions too early. 'I ended up compromising on the flooring, picking an oak laminate – and to this day it's my biggest regret. We got ourselves a puppy and the laminate flooring already bears signs of use.' She also regrets not considering more industrial touches. 'In between wallpaper stripping, tiling and laying foundations, none of this occurred to me – but it'll all be useful research for the next project!'

WORDS **IFEOLUWA ADEDEJI** PHOTOGRAPHS **KASIA FISZER** STYLING **AMELIA SMITH**

Costs & contacts

Extension build £30,000
Kitchen £12,000
Flooring £3,000

Kitchen DIY Kitchens, diy-kitchens.com
Builder Whill Construction, 02922 406437, whillconstruction.co.uk
Plasterer Ed-Bud Building Services of Cardiff, 07393 218263

Left, below and right A seating area facing the garden adds a casual feel to the kitchen.

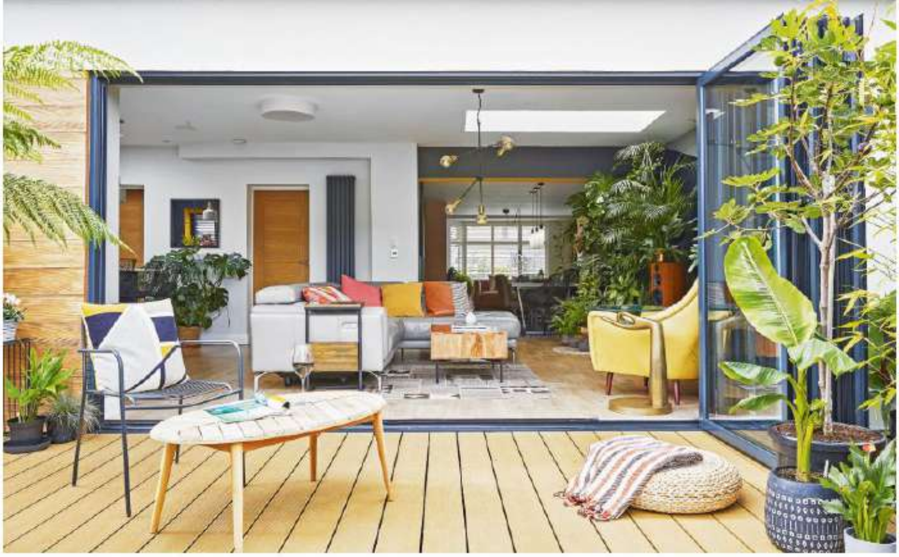
Corner sofa, Natuzzi. ***Light***, Ebay. Yellow ***armchair***, Rockett St George. ***Coffee table***, Wayfair, ***Rug***, Ikea

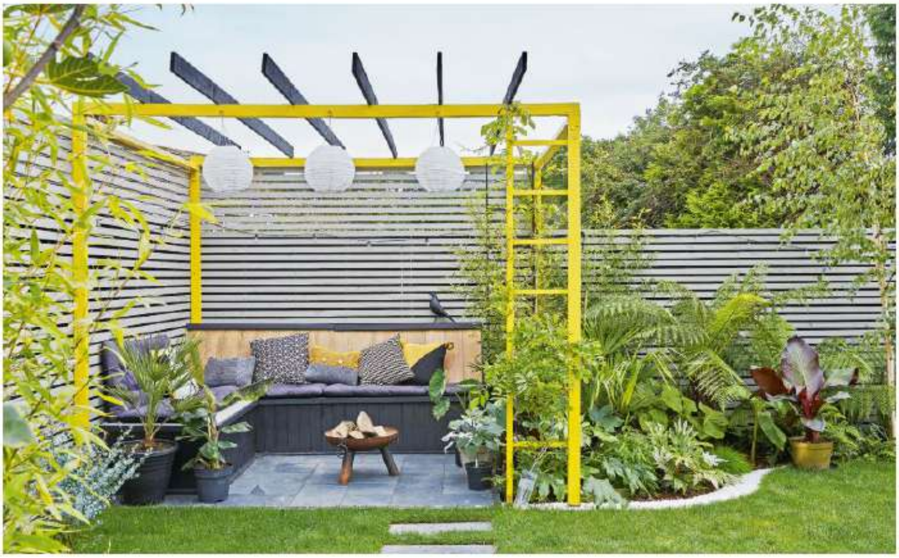
The dining area bridges the gap between living room and kitchen. Oak laminate flooring blends the spaces together.

Dining table and ***chairs***, FW Home Stores. ***Pendant lights***, Wayfair

Clockwise from right It's always sunny in the garden thanks to the splashes of yellow on the cushion, pergola and gate, which unites the whole scheme.

Decking, Cladco. ***Chair***, John Lewis & Partners. Pergola ***painted*** in Mister David, Little Greene. ***Slate floor***, Cardiff Slate & Stone

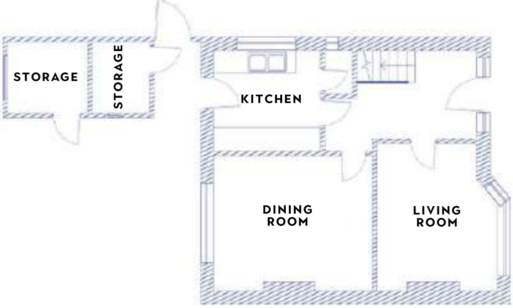




THE PLANS

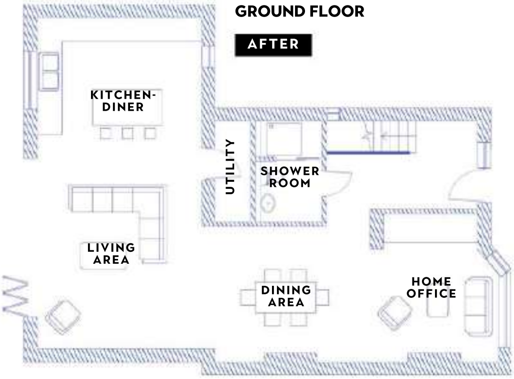
GROUND FLOOR

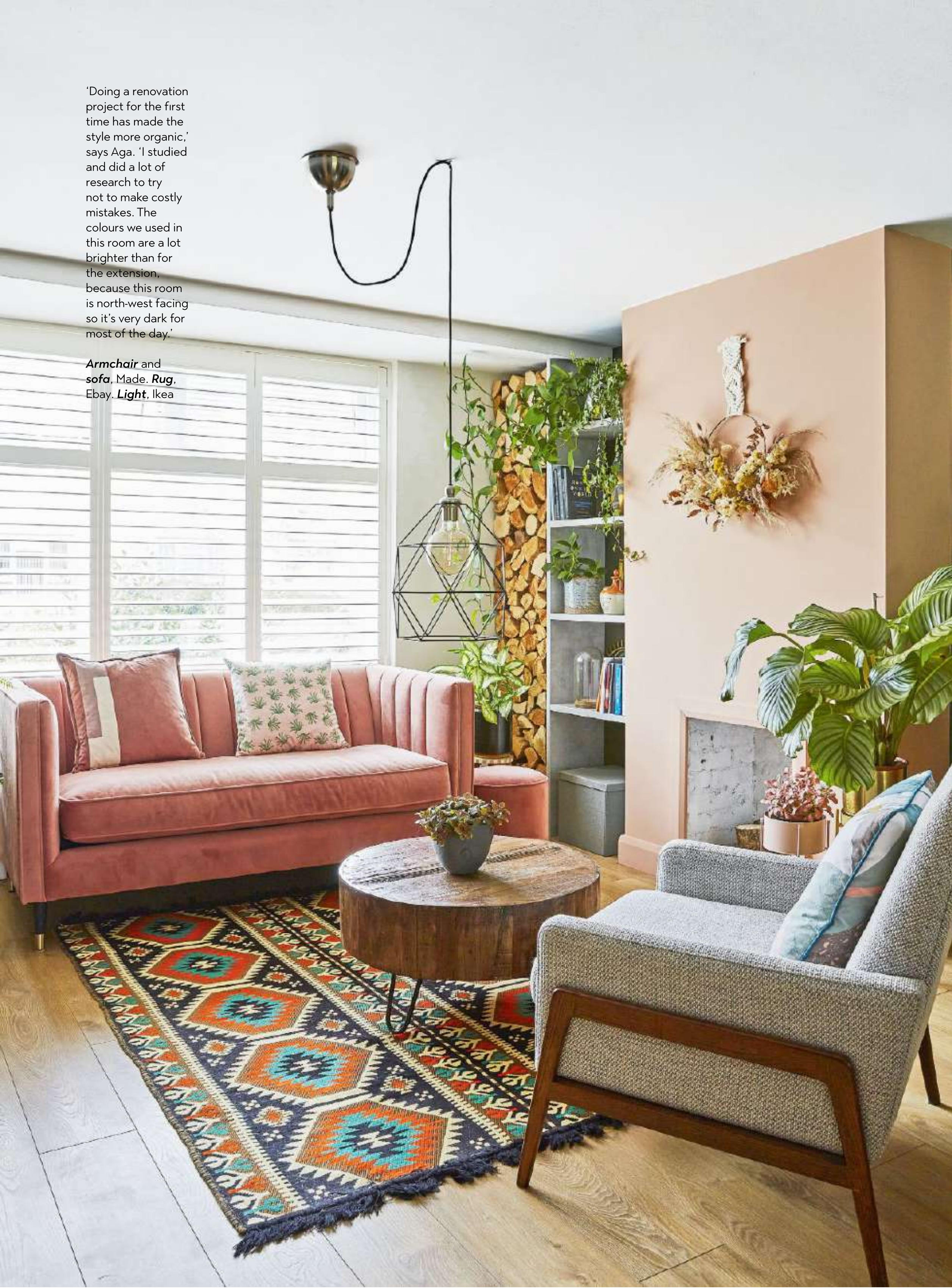
BEFORE


STORAGE
STORAGE
KITCHEN
DINING ROOM
LIVING ROOM

GROUND FLOOR

AFTER


KITCHEN-DINER
UTILITY
SHOWER ROOM
LIVING AREA
DINING AREA
HOME OFFICE



‘Doing a renovation project for the first time has made the style more organic,’ says Aga. ‘I studied and did a lot of research to try not to make costly mistakes. The colours we used in this room are a lot brighter than for the extension, because this room is north-west facing so it’s very dark for most of the day.’

Armchair and ***sofa***, Made. ***Rug***, Ebay. ***Light***, Ikea

Aga found the hallway a challenge due to its lack of natural light. 'We removed the original, battered stairs and installed a simple, new staircase, which I painted dark grey,' she says. 'I tried various colours on the walls and ceiling only to land on white, with a gallery wall up the stairs. Sometimes the simplest solutions are the best.'

Right In the joint office, the grey colour scheme is most effective 'because the dark surround happens to be most suitable for photo/video editing work, which is how my partner and I spend our work days,' says Aga. 'Every house has its airy and moodier spots – the key to a good design is to connect the right function to the right space.'

Walls ***painted*** in Down Pipe, Farrow & Ball. ***Desk chairs***, Humanscale

Left Aga added panelling to the bedroom instead of a headboard, and the result has transformed the space. 'I wanted to make the ceilings in the room look higher and this helped,' she says. By painting the walls and ceiling white the visual division between them disappeared, making a poky room feel light and spacious.

Bed, Ikea. ***Lights***, Amazon. ***Side table***, Jysk

Below Wooden textures and plenty of greenery soften the cool grey colour of the bathroom.

Tiles, Royal Tiles of Cardiff. ***Sink*** and ***taps***, Victorian Plumbing. ***Towel rail***, Ebay

PROJECT TIMELINE

GOT THE KEYS
March 2018

EXTENSION STARTED
July 2018

FINISHED PLASTERING
August 2018

KITCHEN FINISHED
October 2018

FIRST MEAL IN THE NEW SPACE
Christmas 2018

GARDEN COMPLETED
July 2020

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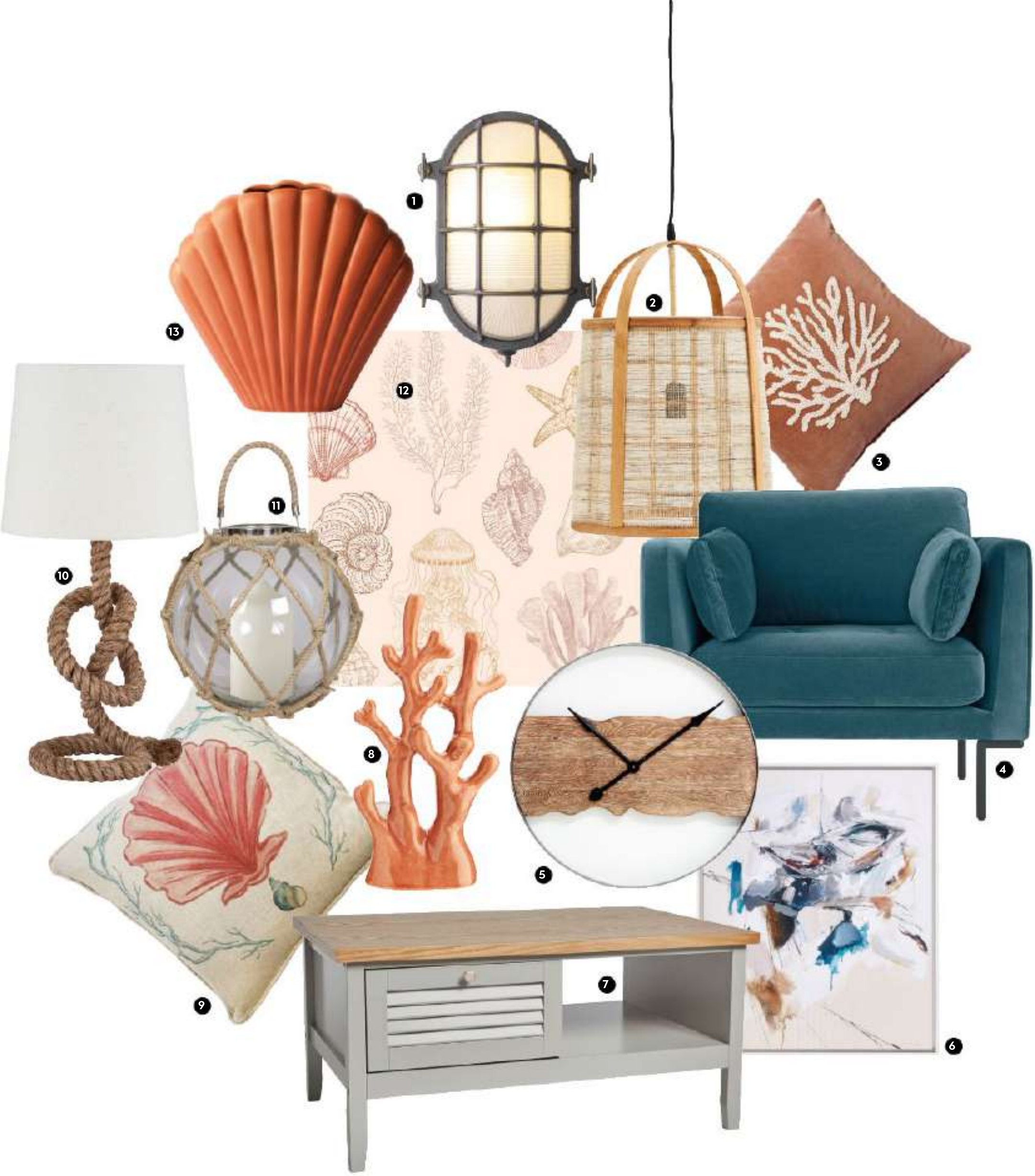

COSY COASTAL

Bringing seaside vibes right through to autumn, combine oceanic motifs with soft textures and warm colours for a space that fosters tranquillity

1 Oval bulkhead light in weathered brass, £215, Davey Lighting **2** Bamboo and linen pendant, £83, Graham & Green **3** Velvet beaded coral cushion, £58, Audenza **4** Harlow armchair in Coastal Blue velvet, £529, Made **5** Jackson wall clock, £159.99, Oak Furnitureland **6** *Lonely Boat* canvas art print by Ben Lowe, £395, Loaf **7** Louvre grey and ash coffee table, £99.99, VonHaus **8** Coral decoration, £28, Natalia Willmott **9** Manderley linen cushion cover, £41, Cream Cornwall **10** Knot table lamp, £129, Furniture Village **11** La Rochelle globe lantern, from £79.95, Annabel James **12** She Sells wallpaper in terracotta, £44 per roll, Lust Home **13** Rust shell vase, £24.99, Coffee & Cloth

FEATURE **AMELIA SMITH**

STUDY bed

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StudyBeds are proving to be a useful household addition in these current times.
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The build is first-class, I wish I had bought one years ago." **Dr Phil Murray**

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Redpop bedside table with rattan door, £155, La Redoute

Lucretia wide solid wood sideboard, £369.99, Wayfair

Avon wall-mounted home office desk, £148.80, Office Boffins

Black rectangle wall mirror with hidden storage, £25, Oliver Bonas

Gamlehult footstool with storage, £60, Ikea

Hidey-Ho side table, £195, Loaf

SMART STORAGE

Hide away those items you don't know where to put with these nifty dual-purpose solutions

Bamboo laundry ladder, £35, Dunelm

Aria coffee table and storage ottoman in Peacock, £439.99, My Furniture

Pia two-tone cheval mirror, £164, Maisons du Monde

Pink velvet storage ottoman, £220, The French Bedroom Company

Stria wall mirror with shelves, £159, Made

FEATURE **TALLULAH RUSHAYA**

NEXT MONTH: WE PICK THE BEST TABLES TO GET THE DINNER PARTY STARTED

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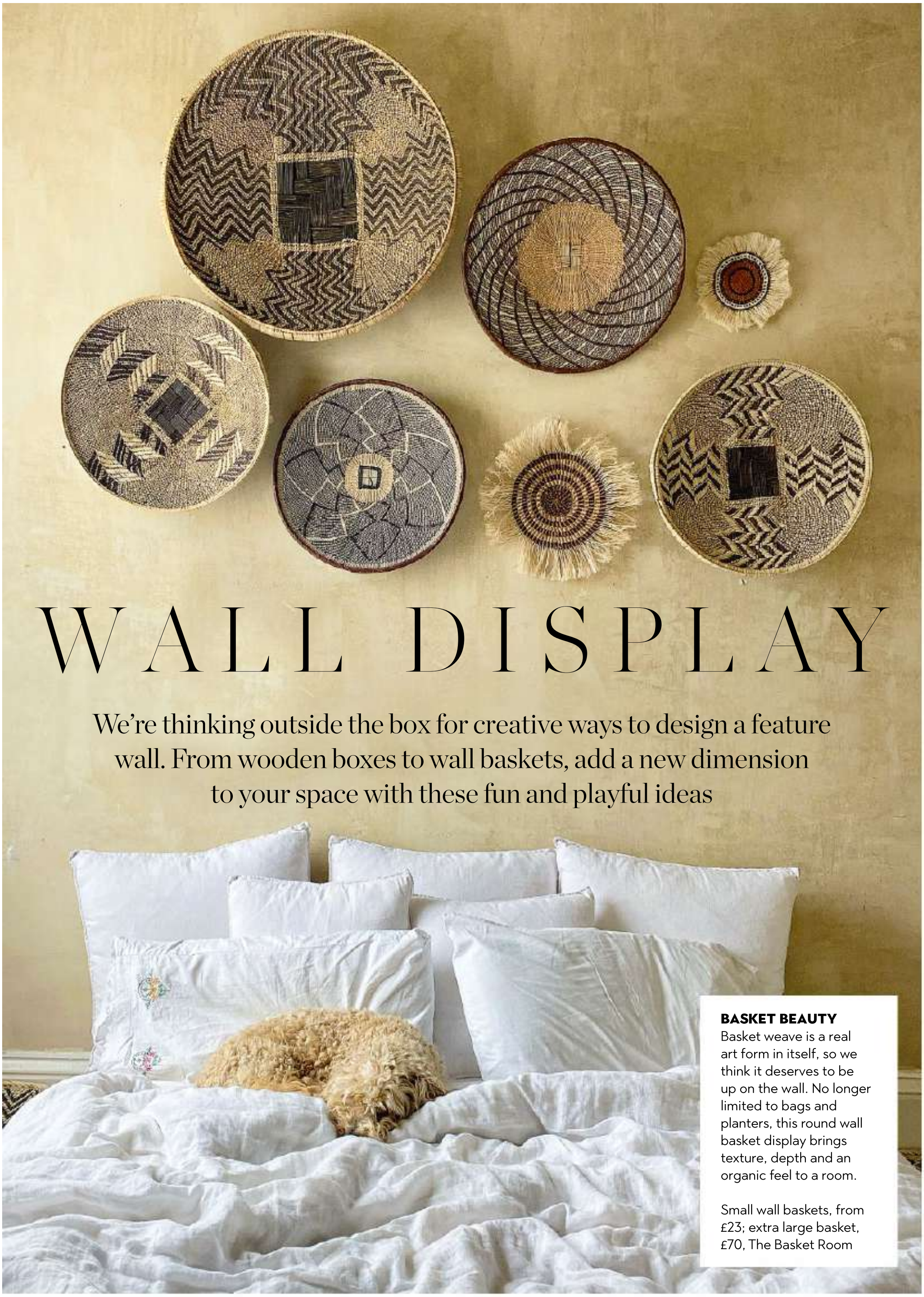


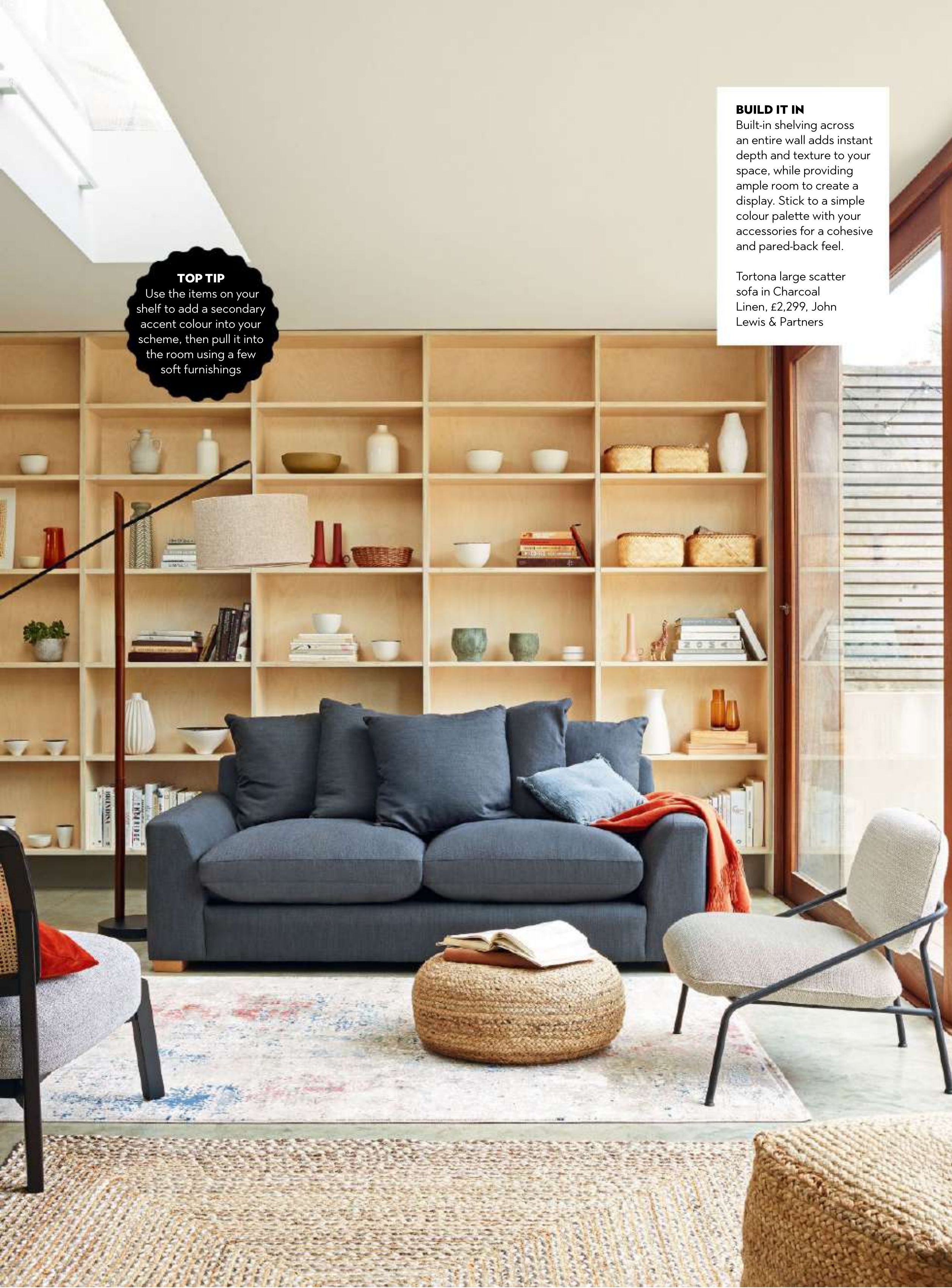
WALL DISPLAY

We're thinking outside the box for creative ways to design a feature wall. From wooden boxes to wall baskets, add a new dimension to your space with these fun and playful ideas

BASKET BEAUTY
Basket weave is a real art form in itself, so we think it deserves to be up on the wall. No longer limited to bags and planters, this round wall basket display brings texture, depth and an organic feel to a room.

Small wall baskets, from £23; extra large basket, £70, The Basket Room

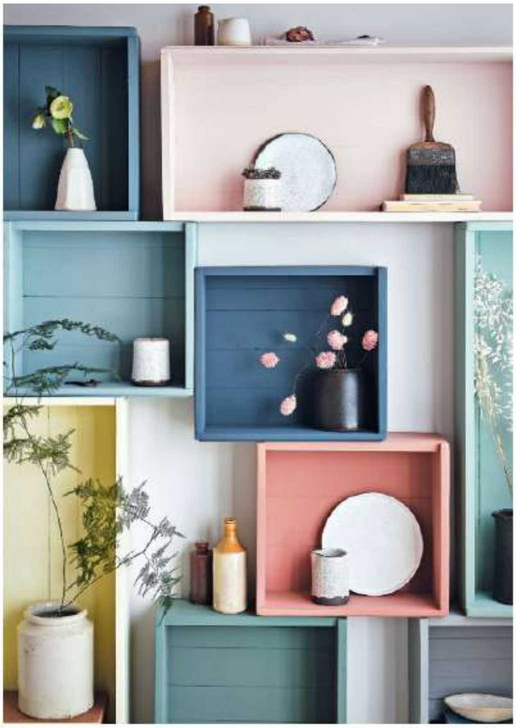
FEATURE **AMELIA SMITH**

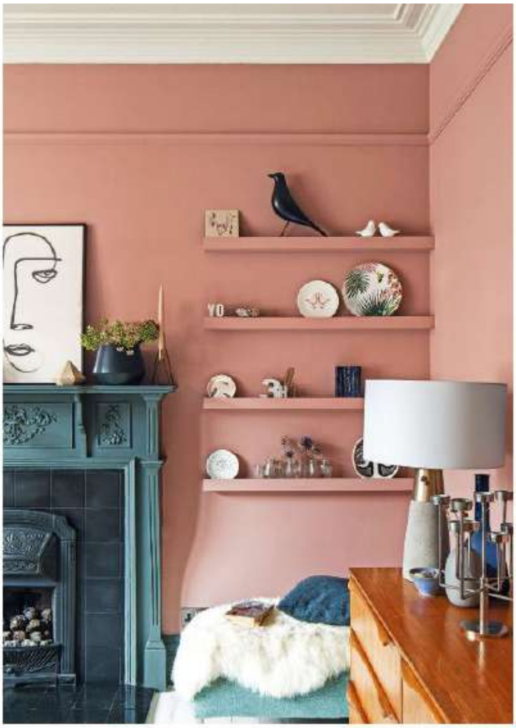


TOP TIP
Use the items on your shelf to add a secondary accent colour into your scheme, then pull it into the room using a few soft furnishings

BUILD IT IN
Built-in shelving across an entire wall adds instant depth and texture to your space, while providing ample room to create a display. Stick to a simple colour palette with your accessories for a cohesive and pared-back feel.

Tortona large scatter sofa in Charcoal Linen, £2,299, John Lewis & Partners





Shelf life

From vases to books, ornaments to plants, if you've spent years collecting beautiful items, showcase them with open shelving

ABOVE: BOX UP
Create a rustic and playful feature wall by painting wooden boxes in pretty pastel shades, piling them up (secured with nails) and positioning treasured items inside.

Countryside collection paints: Burnhma Ovary, Vintage Peony, Still Norfolk and Summer Rain, from £25 per litre for Pure matt emulsion, Fenwick & Tilbrook

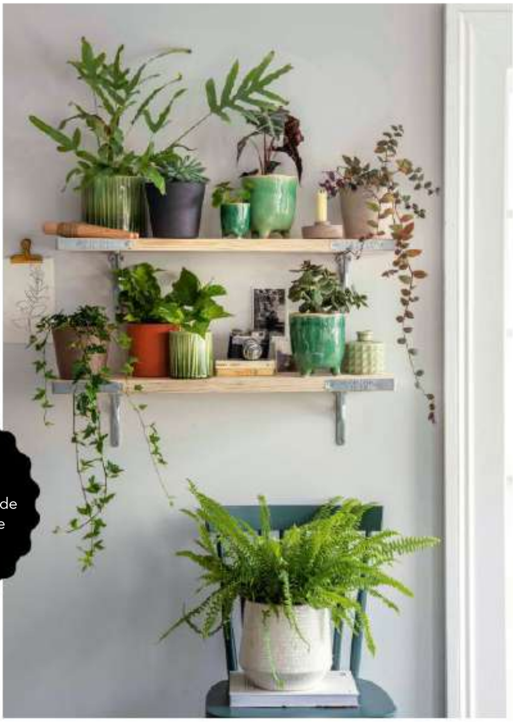
TOP RIGHT: KEEP IT CAMOUFLAGE
If you're short on space, picture rails are a great alternative to shelves as they're narrower and take up less room. Paint your rails the same colour as your wall so your accessories take centre stage.

For picture shelves, try B&Q

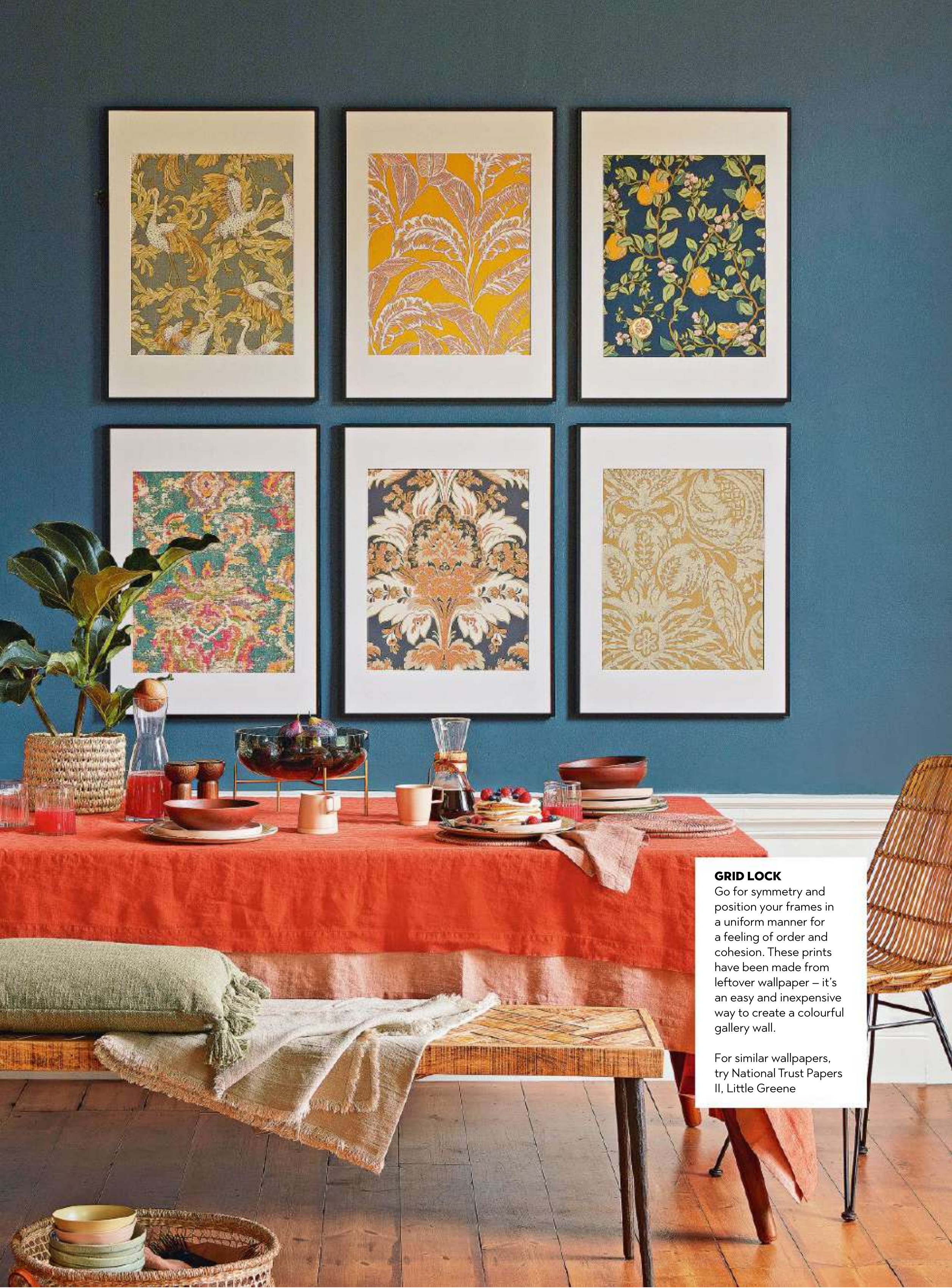
RIGHT: PLANT POWER
Are your plants taking over your home? House them all against one wall and enjoy your plant community – plus it makes watering so much easier.

Raw scaffold shelf, £50, Garden Trading

TOP TIP
Vary the heights and leaf colour of your plants and include trailing varieties like string of hearts or English ivy



PHOTOGRAPH JAMES FRENCH STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR (TOP RIGHT)



GRID LOCK
Go for symmetry and position your frames in a uniform manner for a feeling of order and cohesion. These prints have been made from leftover wallpaper – it's an easy and inexpensive way to create a colourful gallery wall.

For similar wallpapers, try National Trust Papers II, Little Greene

Frame game

We all love a gallery wall. From using vintage frames to enhancing wallpaper, these unique takes on the look offer a contemporary twist

ABOVE: MIRROR MIRROR
A collection of mirrors works especially well in north-facing rooms as they help bounce light around. Stick to the rule of three – each in varying sizes and shapes – and you're onto a winner.

Rattan mirrors, from £75 to £175, Oliver Bonas

TOP RIGHT: BREAK THE MOULD
Play around with your frames, and what's in them, for a 3D take on the traditional gallery wall. Antique-style frames painted to match the wall, with inserts removed and pieces hung in and around the centre, give a sense of perfectly organised chaos.

Walls painted in Hague Blue, £49.50 for 2.5ltrs Estate emulsion, Farrow & Ball. Velvet sofa, Love Your Home

RIGHT: FLOOR FOR MORE
For a chilled out vibe, take your gallery to the floor. Prop prints against your wall, in keeping with the rest of your display, for a cool, edgy look.

Picture frames, from £43.40, Norsu Interiors. For paint, try Crown's Satin Lining, £37.99 for 2.5ltrs Crafted Flat matt

TOP TIP
Pick a colour palette or theme for your gallery wall and stick to it for a strong look and a pulled-together finish

STYLING **NICKY PHILLIPS (LEFT)**; PHOTOGRAPH **RICHARD PARSONS (TOP RIGHT)**

HOOP HEAVEN
Be it your finest embroidery or some beautiful patterned fabrics, display them in embroidery hoops of various sizes for a playful feel. We love how the colours pop against this black wall.

Japanese floral, small Zig Zag and Double Quarter Inch Stripe, £95 per m, Florence Broadhurst

Artistic licence

Whether you're a lover of all things exotic or a keen cook, artful displays of unique items are a styling trend of the moment

ABOVE: WOODEN BOARDS
Adding fun and personality to a kitchen can be tricky. Hang chopping boards of all shapes, sizes and shades up on your wall for a quirky feature that brings warmth and texture, too.

For a similar paint colour, try Pure Essence, from £19 for 940mls Ultra Flat, Benjamin Moore

TOP RIGHT: PLATE UP
Create a showcase from your ceramics by displaying decorative plates across your wall. Choose a colour palette – like pinks, blues and greens here – to keep it cohesive. Simply attach securely with plate grips for a statement space.

Brooklyn 5 wire pendant light, £159, Industville

RIGHT: FAN FAIR
Bring a touch of the Orient into your space by displaying traditional and Bolga fans up on your wall. There are many brightly coloured designs available, but these muted shades make for a chilled space.

Chika frame in black, £42, Bloomingville

TOP TIP
A plaster, brick or stone-effect wall adds textural interest to your display while being neutral enough not to detract from it

DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

Support independent businesses and meet the creatives making waves in the interiors world. This month, we're talking crafted tableware that's been handmade with love

ELLIE & SEAN, SELWYN HOUSE

After almost two years where meals were the only things we could look forward to in our day, it's no surprise that tableware has taken up a larger than usual percentage of our bank balance. 'Tablescaping', the art of setting out a table in a decorative manner complete with crockery, ornaments and floral flourishes, exploded onto Instagram over lockdown, with the #tablescape hashtag now on more than 1.5 million posts. Setting your table, whether for a lone lunch or family dinner, became one of the biggest events of the day – so it's only right that your tableware should live up to expectations. That's where independent makers like Ellie and Sean come in. As owners of Selwyn House, a handmade wooden tableware company, they've been crafting beautiful natural products for lunch, dinner and beyond – and when we came across them, we just had to find out how it all began. Read on to discover the inspiration behind the brand, and check out two more incredible makers whose designs will be on our tables this autumn.

Q Could you describe your business in a sentence?

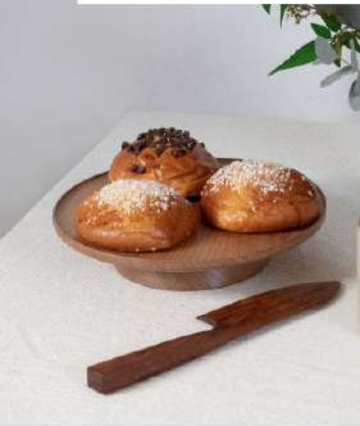
A We handmake contemporary wooden tableware in our Derbyshire workshop using British-grown timbers.

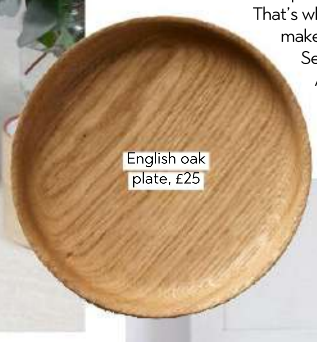
Q How did you get to the point of having your own business?

A We met studying fine art in Leeds and have both always been drawn to making things. After leaving university we fell into nine to five jobs, both feeling a little unfulfilled by what we were doing. Then, in 2017, we got the opportunity to move back to Derbyshire (Ellie's home county) where there was a large workshop and we could really start to live the life we wanted. Sean had already got the woodturning bug so we began making pieces we wanted to use at home. We set out to make functional, warm and honest items that we could use to share great food with family and friends.

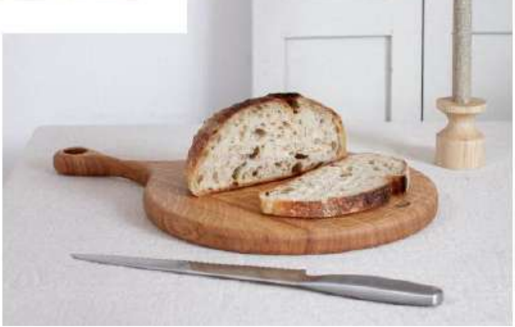
Q What's your favourite thing about what you do?

A It's that we really love working together. We couldn't imagine working any other way now. Or for anyone else for that matter – we love being in charge of our own time, to be able to do the things that bring us joy.





English oak plate, £25



Above Elm cake stand, £70, and brown oak cake knife, £27

Right English oak pizza board, £70, and low ash candlestick, £20

WORDS **ELLEN FINCH** PHOTOGRAPHS **CAROLYN CARTER (SELWYN); BARBORA MRAZKOVA (LILY PEARMAIN)**

English walnut coffee scoop, £26

Brown oak salad servers, £45

Mini dry vases, £20 each

And we have a real passion for the wood we work with; we love being able to show people just how good British timber is.

Q Do you have a piece – or pieces – that you like best?

A Such a hard question! The beauty of British timber is the wealth of character you get – every piece is different and there are always a few special or surprising items we fall in love with on every order. So maybe we'll pick our mini vases – they're easily one of our best sellers. Sean turns each one by hand and they showcase not only the beautiful range of timber but the talent of the turner.

Q What has been your proudest moment – or moments – so far?

A We're always so proud to send what we make to stockists – and grateful that so many of them love what we do. There's only the two of us making every piece by hand, so when we've sent larger wholesale orders out to well-known brands there's a huge sense of achievement that we've managed it!

Follow @selwyn.house on Instagram. Shop the range and find stockists at selwynhouse.co.uk

Dine in style

Shop two more makers bringing new ideas to the table

ANNA VICTORIA, VICTORIA & FINCH

@victoriaandfinch

'I make colourful handmade ceramics designed to uplift everyday moments,' says Anna. 'I discovered my love of ceramics two and a half years ago – I've been hooked since my first pottery lesson – and set up my own business with encouragement from family and friends. It's squeezed into mornings, lunch breaks, evenings and weekends alongside my job as a marketer. Over the last 10 months I've been beavering away on a new collection of wheel-thrown tableware – the culmination of experimentation, hard work and patience. Ceramics make you slow down; each stage can't be rushed – very different to the corporate world.' **victoriaandfinch.co.uk**

Plates from £20, Victoria & Finch

LILY PEARMAIN

@lily.pearmain.ceramics

'I'm a potter making functional stoneware tableware in my studio in south east London, using a natural palette,' says Lily. 'I was a baker and signed up for pottery evening classes at an adult education centre. I was rubbish but loved it, and I carried on from there. After about a year of doing it as a hobby, I was hired as a technician at a members' studio, and learnt a lot very quickly as I was thrown in at the deep end. I started selling my work, got my own studio – which was a big moment – and went full-time about two years ago. I love experimenting; making things I've never made before or discovering a new process. I also really love the community of potters I have around me, and I've been proud to work with some amazing shops.' **lilypearmain.com**

Cloud mug, £28, Lily Pearmain Ceramics

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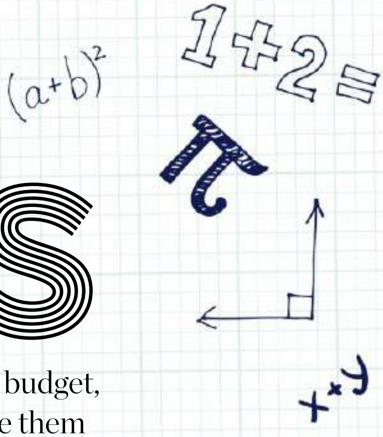
STYLE MATHS



Curate a country-style living room, whatever your budget, with our edit of the latest buys and how to combine them

£200

Midnight Meadow Honeycomb cushion, £65, Fable & Cedar

Aglaonema small artificial plant, £19.99, Dowsing & Reynolds

Bevelled wooden table, £69.99, Zara Home

Stoneware Ruffle vase, £26, Rose & Grey

£180.98

£19.02 LEFT OVER FOR SOME AUTUMNAL FLOWERS

£400

Anyday classic Bobbin console table, £199, John Lewis & Partners

Flute table lamp with Burnt Umber shade, from £115, Loaf

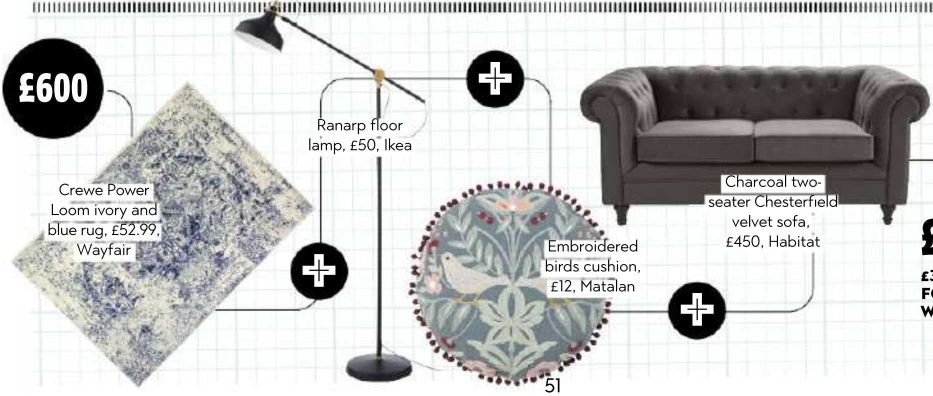
White wooden window pane mirror, £52.95, Melody Maison

Origami throw in mustard, £32.99, Walton & Co

£399.94

6P LEFT OVER – YOU'RE BANG ON BUDGET!

£600



Crewe Power Loom ivory and blue rug, £52.99, Wayfair

Ranarp floor lamp, £50, Ikea

Embroidered birds cushion, £12, Matalan

Charcoal two-seater Chesterfield velvet sofa, £450, Habitat

£564.99

£35.01 LEFT OVER FOR A TAKEAWAY WITH THE FAMILY

FEATURE EMILY SMITH

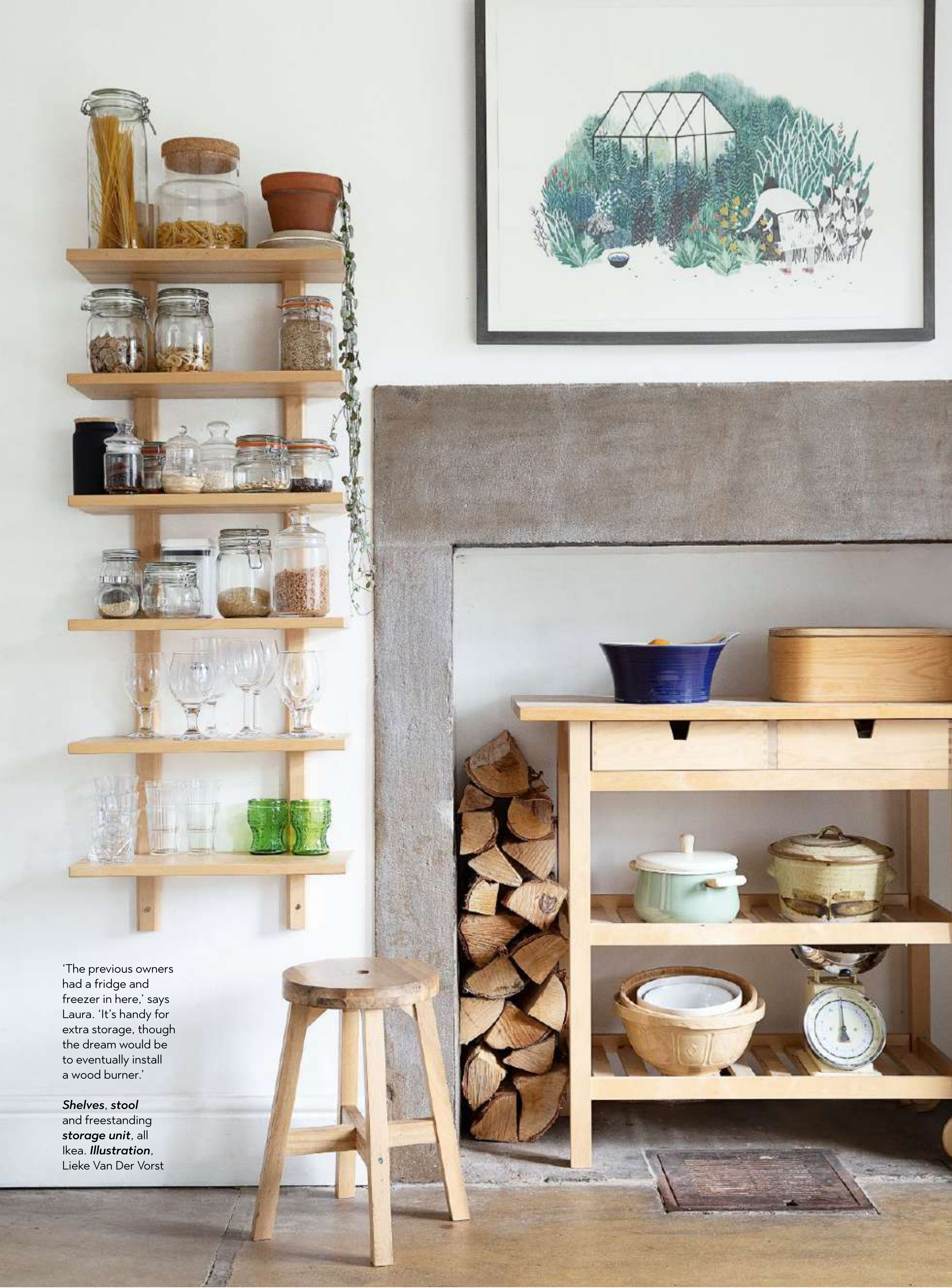
RENOVATED PERIOD TERRACE

BACK TO THE bones

By banishing garish colours and going back to basics, Laura and Andrew Park have brought out the inner beauty of their Victorian house

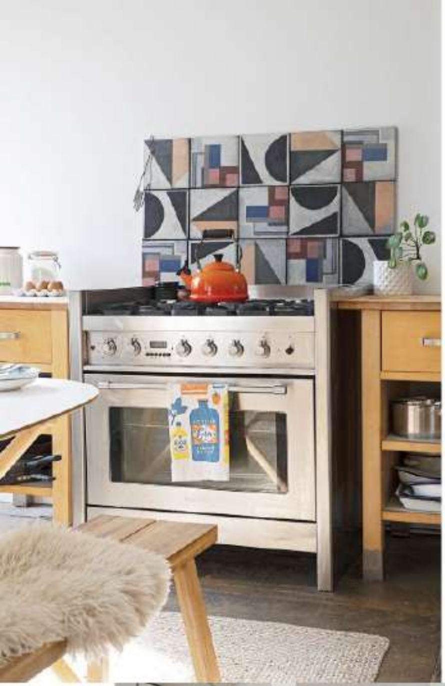
New cushions were added to the existing sill, making it into a comfy window seat. 'The view is beautiful so it's nice to be able to sit in the window,' says Laura. 'We've added vintage magazine racks below, where the boys put their colouring books.'

Throw, Ikea
For similar ***magazine racks***, try Dibor



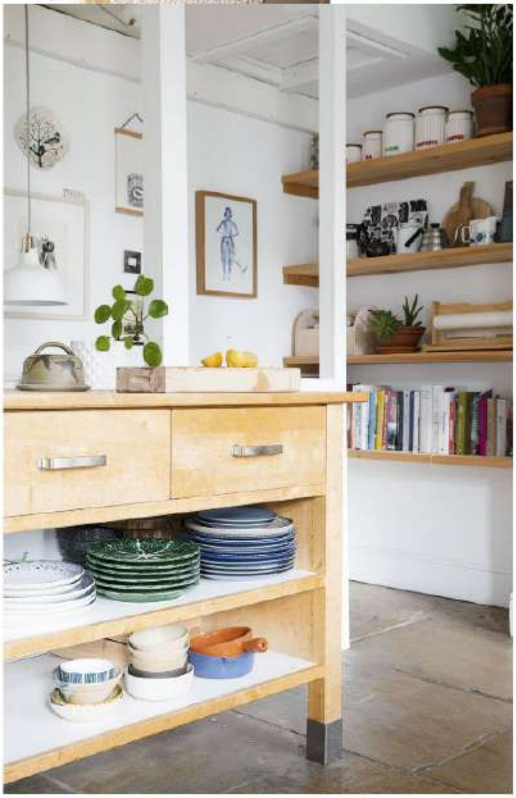
'The previous owners had a fridge and freezer in here,' says Laura. 'It's handy for extra storage, though the dream would be to eventually install a wood burner.'

Shelves*, *stool and freestanding ***storage unit***, all Ikea. ***Illustration***, Lieke Van Der Vorst



Left Geometric encaustic cement tiles create a bold splashback. 'We couldn't decide between three designs, so we put all of them up,' says Laura

Tiles, Bert & May. DeLonghi 90cm gas ***range cooker*** is similar. ***Tea towel***, The Printed Peanut. ***Hob kettle***, Le Creuset



Below Stairs lead from the kitchen to a windowless basement snug, and there's also a hatch for storage above.

Freestanding ***unit*** and ***light***, Ikea. Green ***plates***, Salts Mill. ***Illustration*** of woman in blue, Kaye Blegvad. ***Storage jars***, Hornsea Pottery

Sitting in her kitchen window seat gazing across the lush green valley, Laura Park has no regrets about moving from York to Hebden Bridge. As an illustrator, she can work anywhere, so when her husband Andrew was offered a job at the BBC in Manchester, they felt the market town near Halifax would be a good midway point.

'We'd come across the area before when we walked the Pennine Way,' says Laura, who's originally from Edinburgh. 'It's quite different and creative. There's a very big gay and lesbian community, which makes it so free and open. There aren't many towns in the middle of the countryside where you'll find loads of lovely coffee shops, a cinema and an amazing club venue with acts like Laura Marling playing.'

As soon as she saw the photographs of their three-bedroom Victorian terrace Laura knew it was perfect, but it was over budget at £225,000. 'Since it'd been on the market for six months, we put in a cheeky offer of £205,000 and managed to get it for £213,000,' she says. Taking their cue from the exposed bricks, the couple have returned the house back to its original state. 'It was all about pulling it back to its bones to create a look that's natural, rustic and exposed.'

On a tight budget and not wanting to needlessly rip anything out, they have kept the original bath, toilet and sink, but replaced the flooring and added a new shower cubicle. The kitchen has also been updated with extra storage, bold wall tiles and floor-to-ceiling plywood cupboards to house a previously exposed boiler. 'We love the kitchen so much and spend more time in there than the living room,' says Laura.

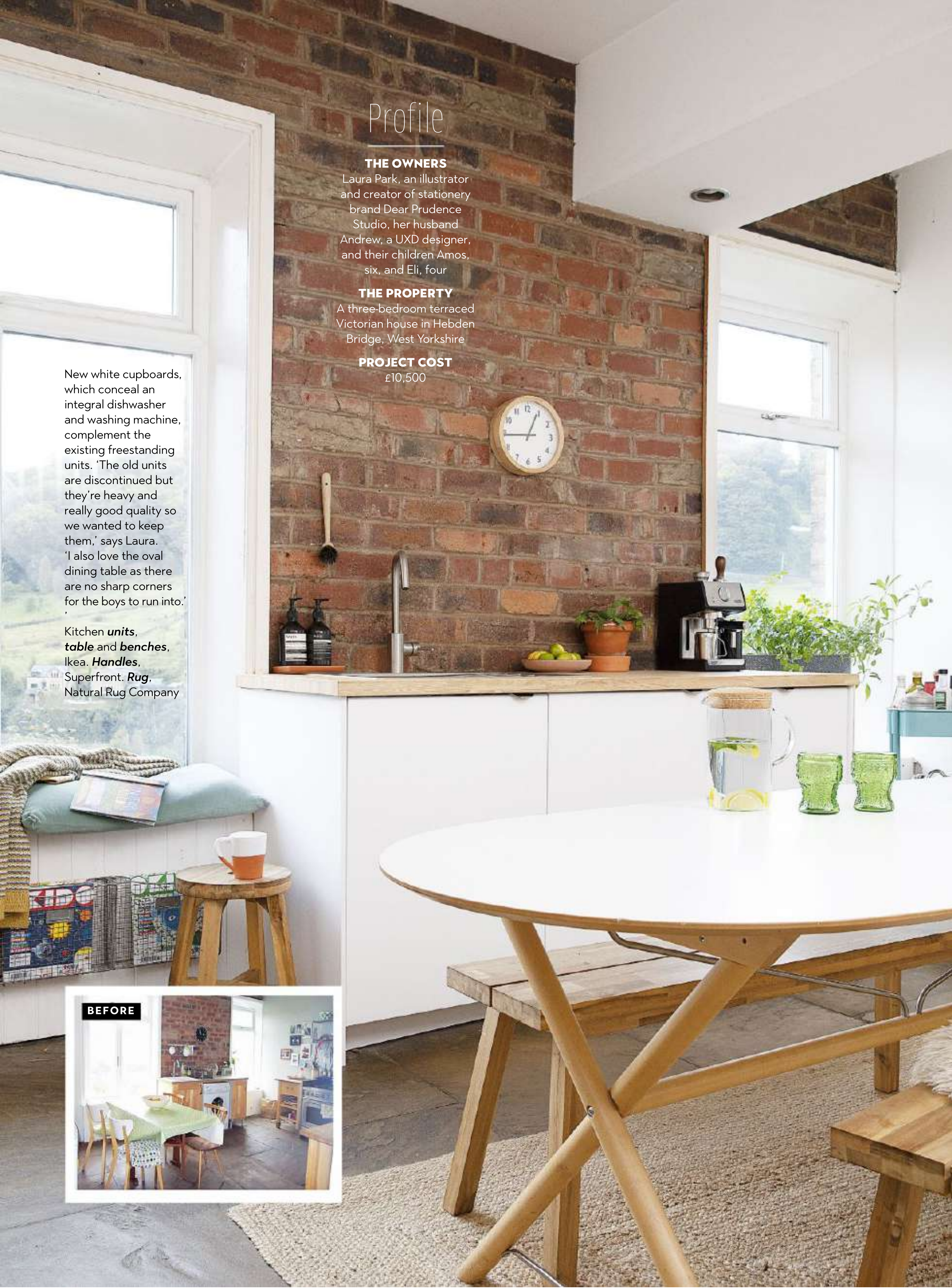
Restoring the stone-flagged kitchen floor was another game changer. 'I wanted the same flooring throughout the living room and kitchen but my husband said it was insane to cover up the flagstones, as each one was probably worth hundreds of pounds,' she says. 'Because there are a lot of hard surfaces downstairs, we wanted upstairs to be cosier, so opted for a new carpet in our bedroom and a painted floor with a big rug in the boys' bedroom.'

Previously dark green and red walls have given way to muted tones. 'I'm a bit scared of colour on walls,' admits Laura. 'I prefer a white, crisp backdrop that I can add textures and colours to through textiles and accessories.' The couple's style had already evolved during their renting days to encompass Scandi and Japanese elements, well before the current Japandi trend. Mid-century pieces are thrown into the mix too, like a G Plan coffee table inherited from Laura's nan and a 1960s 'make your own bag' cloth kit repurposed as a wall hanging. 'I also adore West German pottery but I'm fussy about the ones that I like,' Laura says. 'They have to speak to me.' Luckily the pair have similar tastes, albeit slightly different approaches. 'Andrew's more about the detail, while I'm a bit slapdash and want to start tearing things up!'

In the future, there is scope for the boys to move up into the loft, which currently houses Laura's studio. 'It'd make an amazing huge space for them as it feels like a separate part of the house where they can hide away,' she says. 'We could even add a bathroom and maybe a climbing wall or swing attached to the beam.' Laura's only bugbear is the steep stairs. 'Having grown up in bungalows I find them really annoying. My mum goes down them on her bum as she's scared of falling!'

Now that Laura is pregnant with their third child, the pair are mulling over their future options. 'Hebden Bridge is an amazing place to live,' says Laura. 'Every time you go into town you'll bump into four people you know and stop for a wee chat. But there's no garden and we don't see it as our forever house. In three or four years we'd love to move back to Scotland and buy a doer-upper we can renovate from scratch.'

WORDS **KAREN WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **KATIE LEE**



Profile

THE OWNERS
Laura Park, an illustrator and creator of stationery brand Dear Prudence Studio, her husband Andrew, a UXD designer, and their children Amos, six, and Eli, four

THE PROPERTY
A three-bedroom terraced Victorian house in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire

PROJECT COST
£10,500

New white cupboards, which conceal an integral dishwasher and washing machine, complement the existing freestanding units. ‘The old units are discontinued but they’re heavy and really good quality so we wanted to keep them,’ says Laura. ‘I also love the oval dining table as there are no sharp corners for the boys to run into.’

Kitchen ***units***, ***table*** and ***benches***, Ikea. ***Handles***, Superfront. ***Rug***, Natural Rug Company

Left and below A joiner was hired to make raw pine shelving for the alcoves and Laura has painted the inside of the fireplace white. 'It's really made it pop,' she says. 'Before, it just looked like a dark hole. We did consider painting the exposed brickwork as well, but it was so integral to the age of the building I thought I might regret it. It reflects the brickwork in the kitchen, too.'

Sofa, Loaf. ***Welsh blanket***, Trefriw Woollen Mill. ***Rug***, La Redoute. ***TV unit***, Ikea

The Welsh blanket on the sofa, embroidered with Laura's name and date of birth, was a 30th birthday present from a friend. 'That's one of the things I'd run out with if the house was on fire!' she says.

Sofa, Loaf. Round ***shelving***, Ferm Living. ***Side table***, Ikea. ***Cushions***, Made and Ikea

MAGIC CIRCLE

Striking round shelves are perfect for arranging curated displays of treasured items

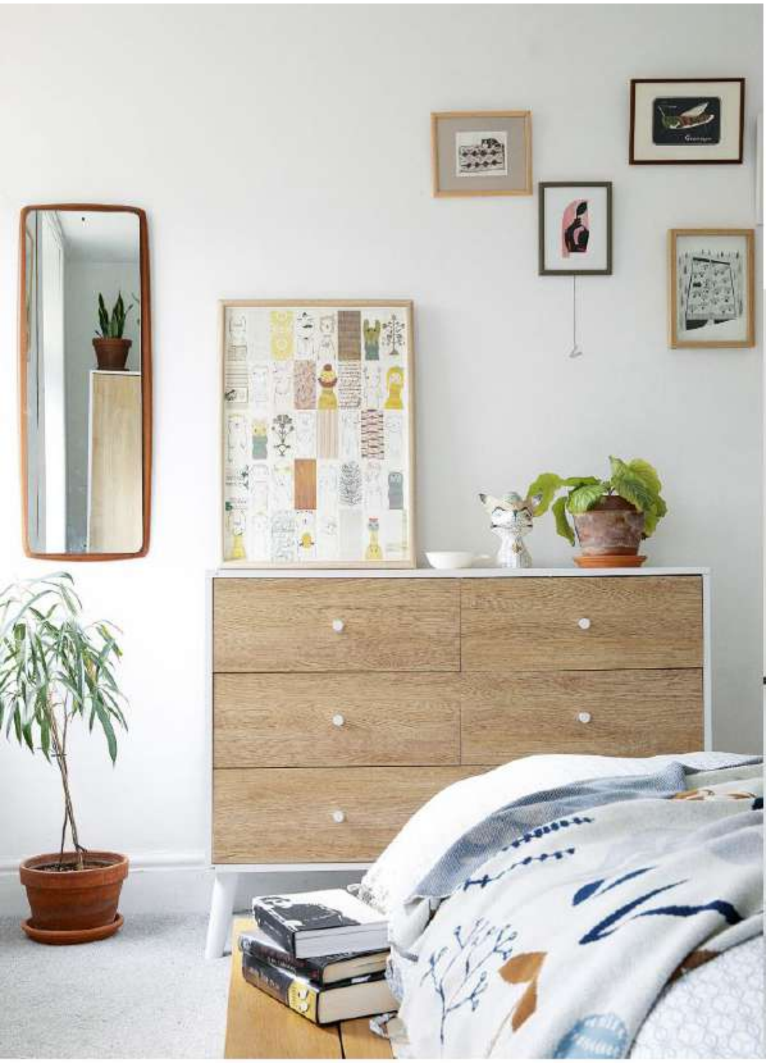
1

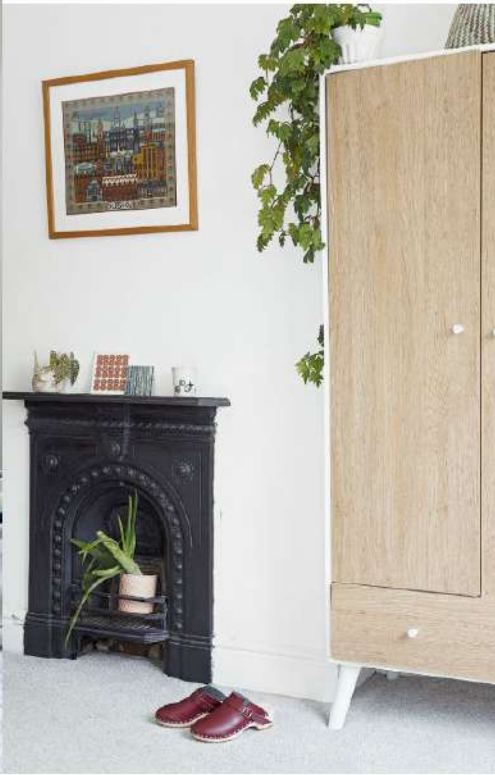
2

1 Round wall three-shelf unit, £30, Homebase
2 La Forma Helia wall shelf, £179.10, Naken
3 Round industrial wall shelf in black, £119, Beaumonde
4 Natural Sanctuary round rattan shelf, £25, B&M

3

4





Left and below A cluster of Laura's favourite artists and illustrators adorn one wall. 'Some people lay pictures out on the floor first but I'm very instinctive and hang things as I collect them,' says Laura. 'I prefer smaller pieces that look random and off centre.'

Chest of drawers, Made. Artwork: ***large print***, Fine Little Day; ***smaller prints*** by Elizabeth Blackadder, Holly Acland, Ana Frois, Tom Frost and Alison Hardcastle

GO HIGH

If you've run out of surfaces to show off your pot plants, hang them up instead

①

②

1 Eyes Shut terracotta hanging planter, £10, Red Candy
2 Ceramic pattern hanging plant pot, £32, The Find Store
3 Stratton hanging pot in Carbon, £15, Garden Trading
4 Grey terracotta foiled hanging planter pot, £17.50, Oliver Bonas

③

④

The beautiful G Plan dressing table was an Ebay buy from 10 years ago. ‘It’s my pride and joy,’ says Laura.

Peg rail, Ikea. Try Sarora Knots for a similar ***plant hanger***

Above and right As this room gets little light, painting the walls in white was a wise move. 'Eli suffers from dust allergies so I ripped up the carpet in here,' says Laura. 'The floorboards were a state. It took a week to repair and clean them before using five coats of Dulux floor paint – it's durable and easy to clean.'

Wall shelf, Ferm Living. ***Hooks*** on door and box ***shelving unit***, both Habitat. ***Bunk beds***, Made. ***Rug***, La Redoute. ***Bedlinen***, Camomile London. ***Pillow cases***, Roddy & Ginger

PROJECT TIMELINE

MOVED IN WITH TWO-WEEK-OLD BABY
July 2016

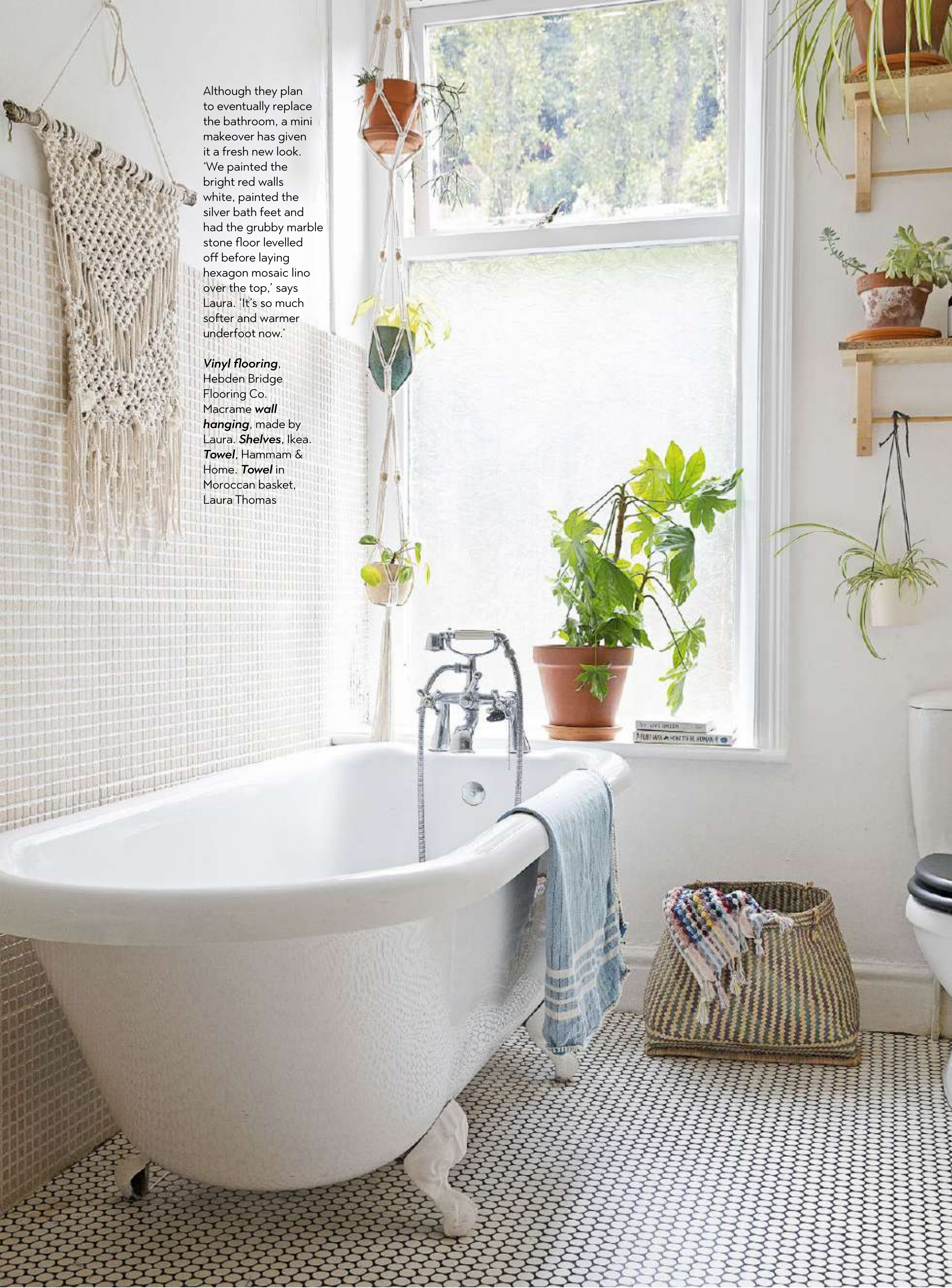
DECORATORS HIRED
September 2016

STONE KITCHEN FLOOR RESTORED
December 2016

NEW CARPETS DOWN
March 2017

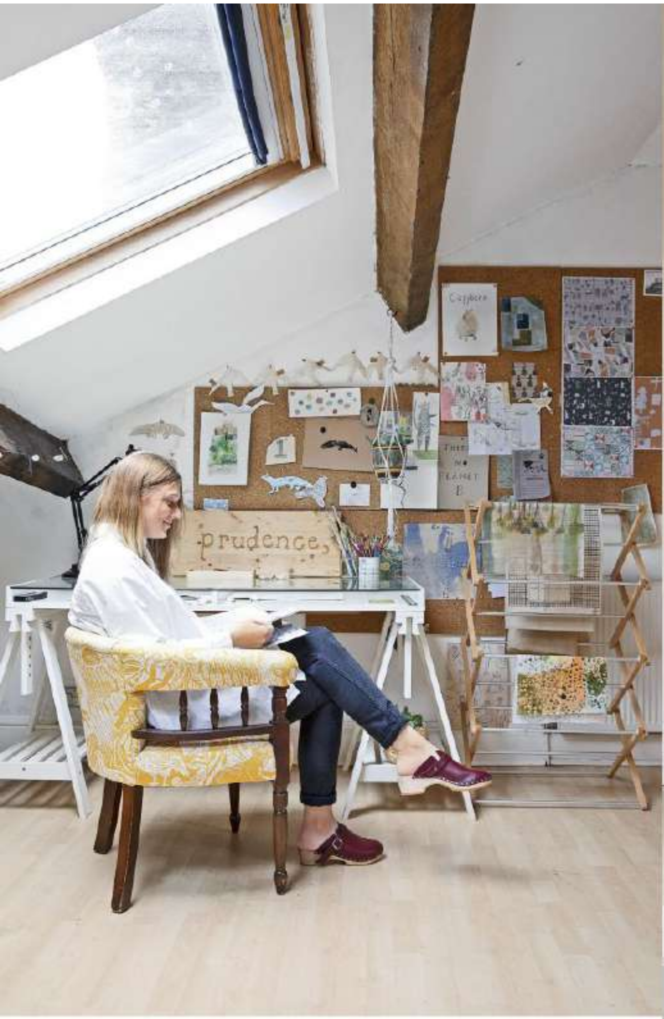
CUPBOARDS AND SHELVES FITTED
April 2017

NEW SHOWER INSTALLED
July 2017



Although they plan to eventually replace the bathroom, a mini makeover has given it a fresh new look. 'We painted the bright red walls white, painted the silver bath feet and had the grubby marble stone floor levelled off before laying hexagon mosaic lino over the top,' says Laura. 'It's so much softer and warmer underfoot now.'

Vinyl flooring, Hebden Bridge Flooring Co. Macrame ***wall hanging***, made by Laura. ***Shelves***, Ikea. ***Towel***, Hammam & Home. ***Towel*** in Moroccan basket, Laura Thomas



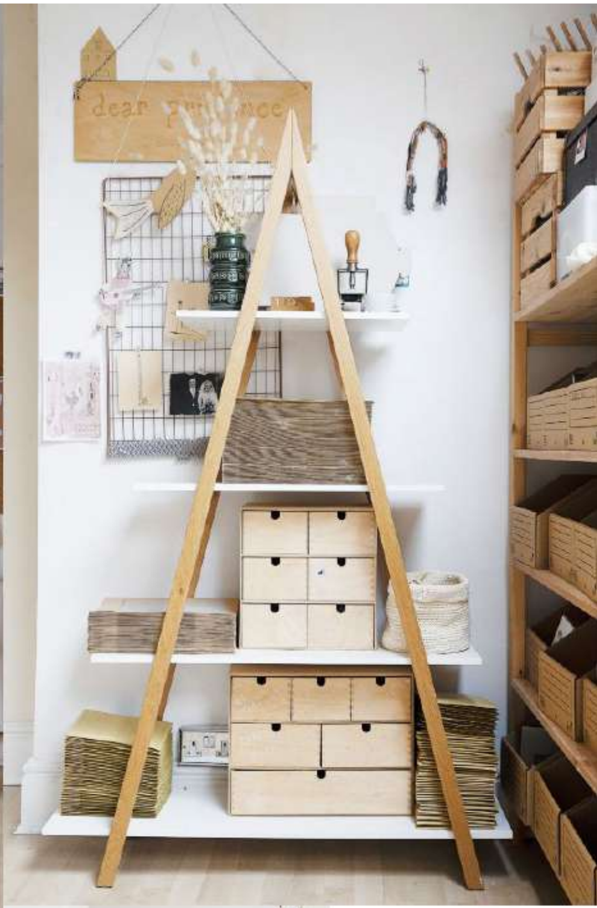
Above Laura's favourite item in her attic office is a chair that she grew up with. 'My grandpa got four of them from a hotel in Ayreshire where he did the catering,' says Laura. 'I love the unusual shape but had the brown scratchy fabric reupholstered.'

Chair ***recovered*** in Mark Hearld Hare fabric. ***Desk***, Ikea. Wooden ***dryer***, Lakeland

Costs & contacts

Kitchen and appliances £4,000
Bathrooms £2,500
Bespoke wardrobes £2,000
Building work £2,000

Kitchen Ikea, ikea.com
Kitchen floor restoration West Yorkshire Tile Doctor, 0345 512 0122, west-yorkshire.tiledoctor.biz
Bathroom flooring Hebden Bridge Flooring Co, 01422 842223, hebdenflooring.com
Kitchen tiles Bert & May, 020 3744 0776, bertandmay.com



Above The flat pack shelving is easy for illustrator Laura to take to trade shows.

A-frame ***shelving***, La Redoute. Dear Prudence wooden ***sign***, Hotdot Laser. Grid ***notice board,*** Gordon Riggs Garden Centre

Left Laura's old cameras, inherited from her grandpa, sit next to dried flowers and leaves collected as props.

Ivor ***shelving*** and wooden ***storage boxes***, Ikea. West German ***pottery***, Hebden Bridge Antique Centre

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Terracotta

Bring a sun-baked and grounded feel to your home with the latest earthy shade to hit our radar. Here's why we're loving terracotta

When you think of terracotta, the first thing that springs to mind may well be plant pots and kitchen floor tiles. Terracotta clay has been used in interior design for thousands of years, from ancient Chinese pottery to Egyptian sculptures, and its charm remains as profound as ever. Clay brings a rugged and homely feel to a space, and while we love the soft texture and smooth touch of the material, it's the colour itself that's been making waves in the interior design sphere.

The word terracotta literally translates as 'baked earth' in Italian. There's no denying that we've been turning to the natural elements in our interiors more than ever before – think rattan furniture, wicker baskets and shelves full of house plants. A recent penchant for earthy and rustic colours is, therefore, not surprising.

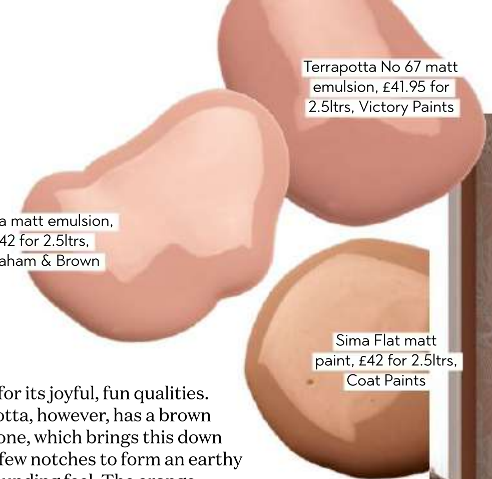
We're looking to our homes for a feeling of comfort and safety, and where better to look for this than mother nature? While tranquil blues and soft greens bring calmness throughout the summer months, in autumn and winter, terracotta is our go-to relaxing hue.

'Terracotta is one of these wonderful in-between colours,' says colour specialist Karen Haller (karenhaller.co.uk). 'It's typically orange with brown and a hint of pink, too.' In colour psychology, orange is

Patrick unbuttoned two and half-seater sofa in Bahama cotton matt velvet, £2,565; Dahlia footstool, £515, Sofa.com

It's the colour for you if:

1. You want a room that's grounding and earthy
2. Natural colours make you feel relaxed
3. You want to add warmth to a north-facing room
4. You want a space that's calm yet bold



Terrapotta No 67 matt emulsion, £41.95 for 2.5ltrs, Victory Paints

Aloha matt emulsion, £42 for 2.5ltrs, Graham & Brown

Sima Flat matt paint, £42 for 2.5ltrs, Coat Paints

Monstera Leaf wallpaper in light terracotta, £20 per roll, I Love Wallpaper

known for its joyful, fun qualities. Terracotta, however, has a brown undertone, which brings this down quite a few notches to form an earthy and grounding feel. The orange adds a feeling of warmth, while the hint of pink brings a comforting, nurturing element.'

Grounding, warm and comforting, terracotta is the perfect wall colour for rooms where you want to feel relaxed and cocooned, like your living room or bedroom. As with all colours, there is a wide spectrum of terracotta hues – from soft, almost pastel shades, to rich muddy colours. 'When decorating with terracotta, I'd mix dusky pinks and natural wood to add to the grounded and earthy tones,' says interior designer and colour consultant Lola Swift (lolaswift.co.uk).

'Combining it with other natural colours, such as greens and blues, can give a sense of balance to your scheme,' adds Dominic Mylands, CEO at Mylands Paints (mylands.com). 'But for a more sophisticated and dynamic look, I'd contrast with a colder grey.'

As the dark nights draw in, there's no scheme cosier than burnished brass metallics, pale woods, a chunky knit rug and flickering candles set against a brave and fiery terracotta backdrop. Now just let us grab some blankets...

Angled totem vase, £11, Sass & Belle

Tangier rug, from £89, Barker & Stonehouse

Burwell sofabed in terracotta, £1,099.89, Made to Last

The rules

DO

Combine with other natural colours

Add depth with organic textures

Choose a more orange terracotta for a north-facing room

DON'T

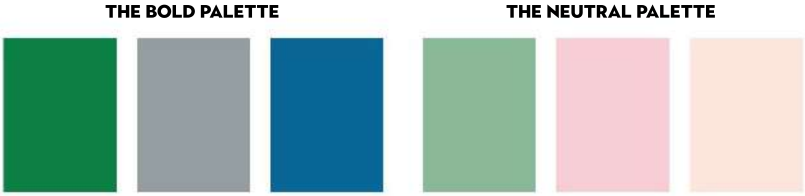
Combine with purple

Be afraid to use two shades in one room

Forget to try before you buy

The perfect pairing to terracotta

Elevate your scheme with either bold or neutral hues



FEATURE **AMELIA SMITH**

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Kloeber Timber FunkyFront Entrance Door
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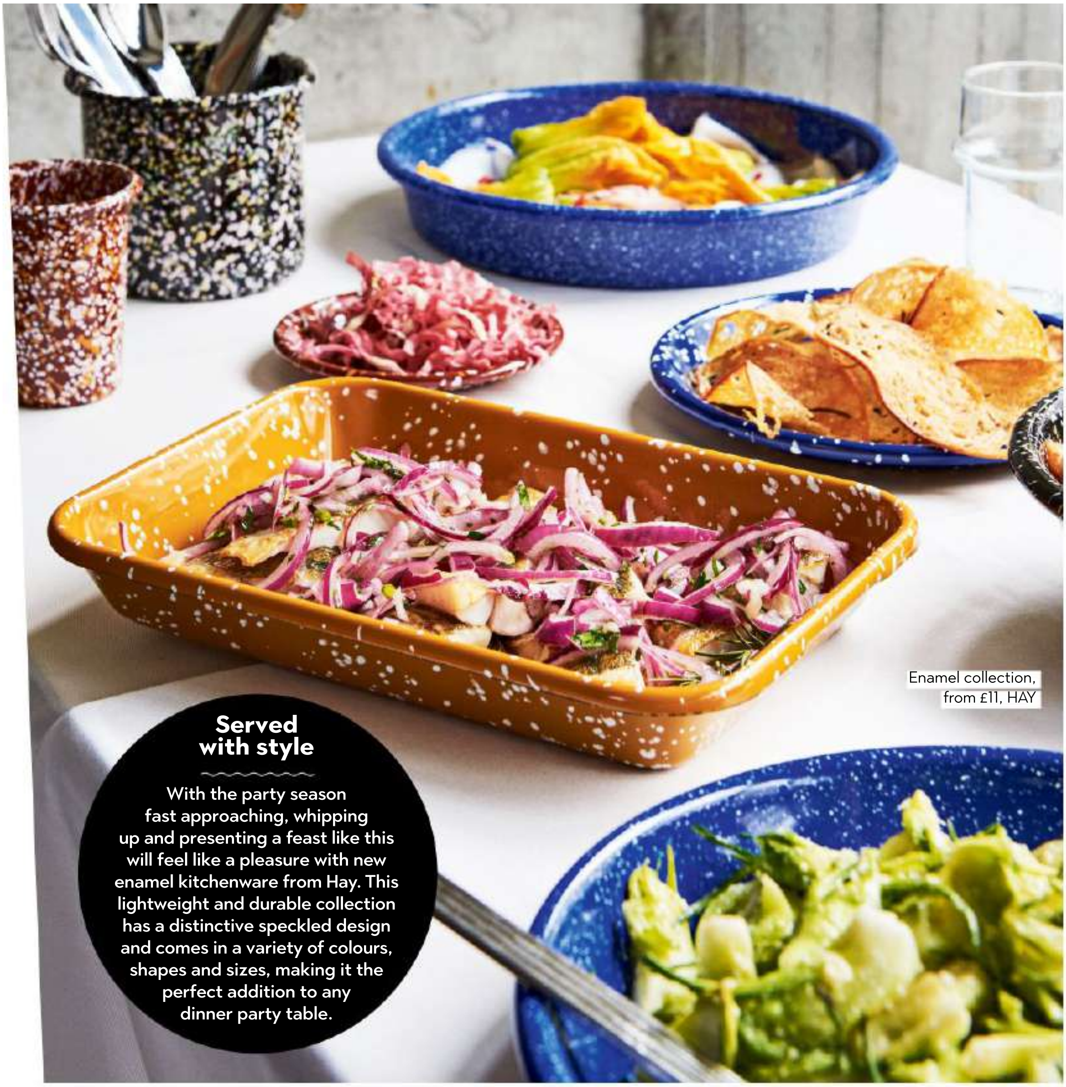
STYLE crush

Sometimes we come across a product we just can't stop thinking about – and we want to share it with you. Here's what we've fallen for this month

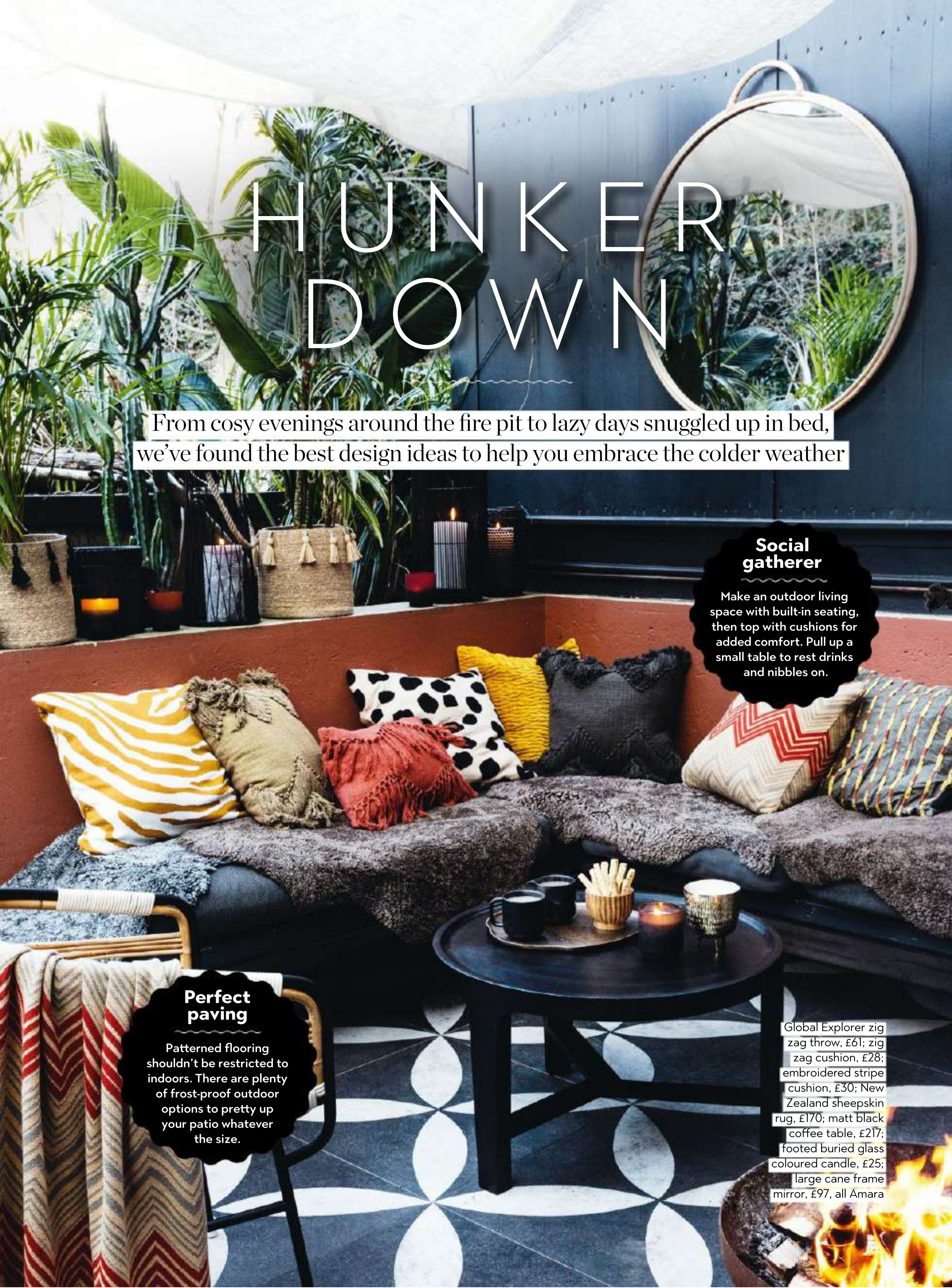


Enamel collection, from £11, HAY

Served with style

With the party season fast approaching, whipping up and presenting a feast like this will feel like a pleasure with new enamel kitchenware from Hay. This lightweight and durable collection has a distinctive speckled design and comes in a variety of colours, shapes and sizes, making it the perfect addition to any dinner party table.

FEATURE **EMILY SMITH**



HUNKER DOWN

From cosy evenings around the fire pit to lazy days snuggled up in bed, we've found the best design ideas to help you embrace the colder weather

Social gatherer

Make an outdoor living space with built-in seating, then top with cushions for added comfort. Pull up a small table to rest drinks and nibbles on.

Perfect paving

Patterned flooring shouldn't be restricted to indoors. There are plenty of frost-proof outdoor options to pretty up your patio whatever the size.

Global Explorer zig zag throw, £61; zig zag cushion, £28; embroidered stripe cushion, £30; New Zealand sheepskin rug, £170; matt black coffee table, £217; footed buried glass coloured candle, £25; large cane frame mirror, £97, all Amara

Log basket, £180, Garden Trading

Outdoor centrepiece

Cover, warmth and lights are important things to consider when throwing a garden party. A fire pit nails two of those and naturally draws people together.

Classic collection fire pit, from £165, FirepitsUK

Timeless accessory

A sturdy basket, that's as attractive as it is practical works well to accommodate everything you need for lighting the perfect fire.

Alfresco appeal

There's something magical about gathering outside around a roaring fire, huddling up in blankets and warming your hands on a hot choc

Vancouver fire basket, £49.99; mugs, £5.99 each; velvet cushions, £17.99 each; grey Weaver Paoletti throw, £29.99, all Dobbies

Bohemian vibe

Use carefully placed lanterns to illuminate your surroundings with a soft glow, whether it's on the patio, balcony or terrace.

Rattan wooden lantern with Truglow candle, £29.99, Lights4Fun

Zeus black cotton cushion, £49, Beaumonde

Tassel cushion, £7, George Home

Easy update

Make an instant impact by scattering weatherproof cushions across your garden furniture. Work a similar colour palette and patterns to your inside décor to create a natural extension of your home.

Icon boho broken stripe outdoor cushion, £19.95, Cuckooland

Suitable serving

From pre-dinner nibbles to mealtime accompaniments, small bowls are the perfect table accessory. Find a design with a colourful glaze to serve snacks in style.

Mango wood nibble bowl and board, £10, Habitat

FOR MORE AUTUMNAL DESIGN IDEAS, VISIT REALHOMES.COM/DESIGN

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FEATURE JESSICA TAVERNER

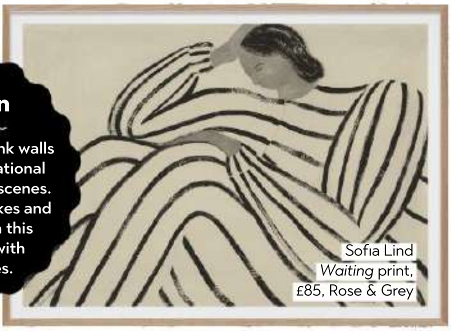
Lazy days

Go all out with your textures – from velvet throws to jute rugs and tactile wall displays – for a bedroom that feels as good as it looks

Diggins bowl in Burnt Custard, £32 for two; rattan bed, from £1,045; Muggins mug in Baker's Blue, £12; Lazy Linen bed linen in white, from £45; Lazy Quilt throw in ochre, £215, all Loaf

Add dimension

Bring interest to blank walls with photos, inspirational quotes or painterly scenes. The fluid black strokes and organic colours in this print team well with natural textures.



Sofia Lind *Waiting* print, £85, Rose & Grey

Finishing touch

The imperfections in recycled glass add an authentic, eco-friendly ambience wherever they're used. Place three varying height vases in a cluster for a styling opportunity not to be missed

Recycled amber glass vase, £9, Heavenly Homes & Gardens

Side table, £22, George Home

Wood effect

The double shelf space on this design provides much-needed capacity to stash your belongings and keep bedtime essentials close at hand. The lightweight frame is portable, too.

Astraeus ceramic lamp, £60, Habitat

Mood-inducing

The perfect, sculptural accent piece for your bedside table, this lamp features a slender abstract shape with a mottled finish – a light source and an art form in one.

Leafy green

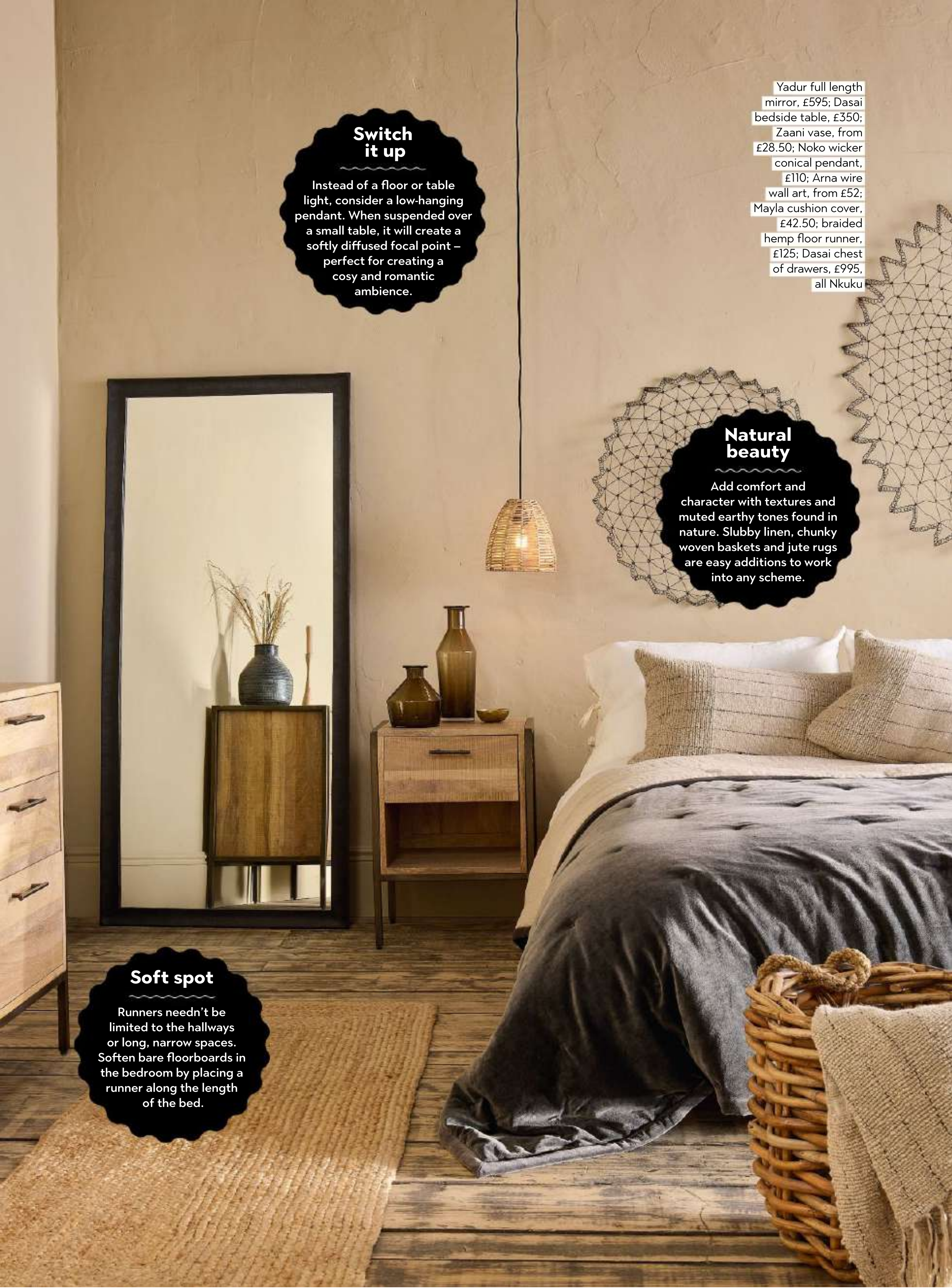
Bring warmth to your bedroom with layers of cushions and blankets. A knit or soft texture makes a welcome addition to the end of a bed or thrown over a casual armchair.

Arai jacquard throw, £39.50, Oliver Bonas

Decorative piece

An essential for keeping your décor and belongings organised, this round design looks best when styled with perfumes, candles or a selection of trinkets.

Round wooden tray, £10, B&M



Yadur full length mirror, £595; Dasai bedside table, £350; Zaani vase, from £28.50; Noko wicker conical pendant, £110; Arna wire wall art, from £52; Mayla cushion cover, £42.50; braided hemp floor runner, £125; Dasai chest of drawers, £995, all Nkuku

Switch it up

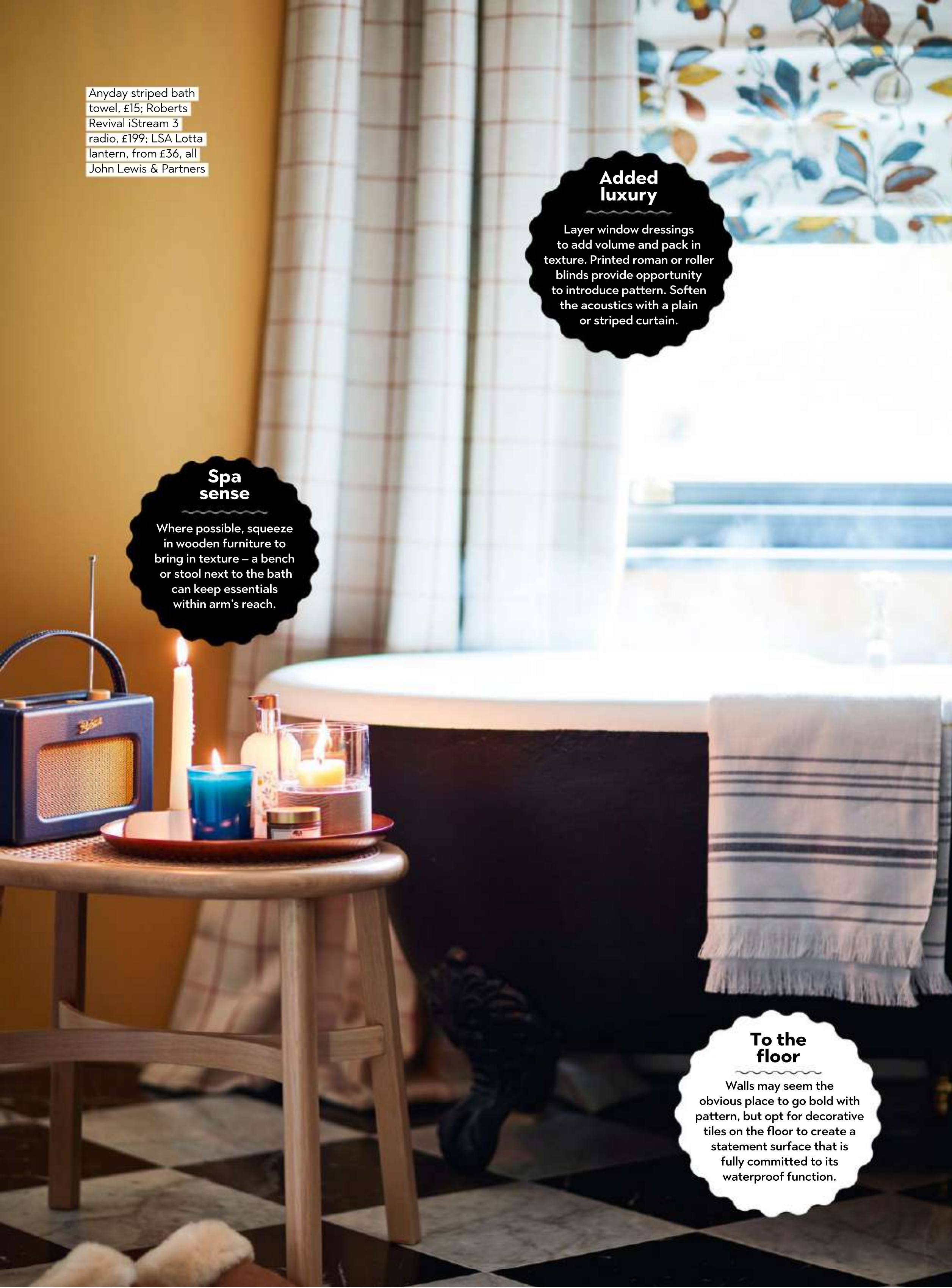
Instead of a floor or table light, consider a low-hanging pendant. When suspended over a small table, it will create a softly diffused focal point – perfect for creating a cosy and romantic ambience.

Natural beauty

Add comfort and character with textures and muted earthy tones found in nature. Slubby linen, chunky woven baskets and jute rugs are easy additions to work into any scheme.

Soft spot

Runners needn't be limited to the hallways or long, narrow spaces. Soften bare floorboards in the bedroom by placing a runner along the length of the bed.



Anyday striped bath towel, £15; Roberts Revival iStream 3 radio, £199; LSA Lotta lantern, from £36, all John Lewis & Partners

Added luxury

Layer window dressings to add volume and pack in texture. Printed roman or roller blinds provide opportunity to introduce pattern. Soften the acoustics with a plain or striped curtain.

Spa sense

Where possible, squeeze in wooden furniture to bring in texture – a bench or stool next to the bath can keep essentials within arm's reach.

To the floor

Walls may seem the obvious place to go bold with pattern, but opt for decorative tiles on the floor to create a statement surface that is fully committed to its waterproof function.

Sink into sublime

The ultimate autumn escape – immerse yourself in calming scents, flickering candles and relaxing music for a spa-style getaway in your own home

Swinger wall fitting, £84; Espere pendant in clear waffle glass, £47, both Pooky

Glam it up

Lighting can transform the feel of your bathroom. The textured glass on this elegant shade casts a subtle, dappled pattern across the walls.

Stylish stowaway

In a room with so many little essentials, storage is key. Cotton wool pads, earbuds and trinkets can be tastefully hidden away in lidded jars.

Oak and stoneware storage canisters, £30 for small, £45 for large, Marquis & Dawe

BATH ESSENCE
Lavender
MADE IN YORKSHIRE

Lavender bath essence, £11.99, Dobbies

Scented soak

Pour a small amount of essence into warm, running water to diffuse relaxing aromas, perfect for creating a luxurious bathing experience.

Woven wonder

Baskets offer plenty of room to stash towels and loo roll or add a relaxed feel when styled with potted house plants.

Elemental basket, £15, Matalan

Bright bundle

When buying new towels, choose colours or patterns that complement your décor. The weight of soft cotton will leave you feeling enveloped and will instantly upgrade your bathtime.

Alto set of four towels in ochre, £39, Made

Fairest of all

For a quirky twist, go for organic, fluid silhouettes, such as this pebble-shaped mirror. The matt black frame and curvaceous form is very on-trend.

Black rimmed organic shape mirror, £18, Primark

Nintendo

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The design CLINIC

Need our help?

Got a DIY dilemma? Want to settle a domestic style dispute? Send us your questions on social media or email us at rhsubmissions@futurenet.com

Whether you're torn on two paint colours or are debating whether to extend upwards or outwards, the *Real Homes* team is here to answer your questions

At your service

Meet the people ready to help with your dilemmas

Ellen Shares the reno tips she's learned from chatting to the pros

Alison The go-to for all things DIY, with tons of wisdom to impart

Annie Our shopping expert will pick out the best buys for your home

Amelia Has her finger on the pulse of all things style, kitchen and bathroom

Emily *Real Homes'* resident colour expert is a lover of bold hues

Camille Has plenty of space-saving, wallet-friendly advice for renters

Flair flush outdoor wall light, £40; polished brass numeral, £5; Bulevar grey decor wall and floor tile, £32.50 per m^2; Mayfair antique white trough, £25, all Homebase

EXTERIOR ADVICE

Q I want to give my house a quick and easy autumnal facelift. What would you recommend?

A It's so lovely coming home to a front door as stylish as your interior, and the change in season is the perfect excuse for a revamp. Door wreaths are becoming more and more popular, and they're no longer reserved for Christmas! Autumn sees bright orange hues, crisp red leaves and berries aplenty made into masterpieces for your door. In my opinion, when it comes to wreaths, the bigger the better, and this chunky design sets the tone for a rustic and warming home. Faux candles in tall metal lanterns bring a welcoming feel, while also providing a little extra light for safety.

SPACE ADVICE

Q How can I make my home feel bigger without extending?

A It all depends on your budget. The most obvious solution would be to open up your home by removing walls, whether to create a bigger kitchen-diner or a master bedroom. You could also convert the loft or the garage into living space. Bathroom too small? Look at sacrificing a spare bedroom to create a bigger space with a spa-style feel. Other than that, it's all about tricks of the eye. In the kitchen, banish wall units in favour of open shelving, or have one wall of units and keep the rest free. Leggy furniture gives the illusion of space with more flooring visible. It's not necessarily true that dark colours make a space feel smaller, but consider using them in rooms with less natural light, and enhance brighter rooms with light colours.

An open-plan space plus open shelving enhance the dimensions of this room

PLANTING ADVICE

Q What can I plant now in preparation for spring?

A Between October and December is the perfect time to get your garden ready for spring by planting key bulbs. Try cheery daffodils, tulips, hyacinths and crocuses to get guaranteed colour once things come back to life – plus, they grow in pots if you haven't a garden of your own.

RENOVATION ADVICE

Q Why are there cracks in my new plaster?

A It can be frustrating to see fine lines appear on freshly plastered walls. The most likely cause of cracks is shrinkage due to the plaster drying out too quickly. This could be down to hot weather or turning the central heating on before the plaster's fully dried out.

If they're only hairline cracks, or they're less than five millimetres, they shouldn't cause any problems, but it is best to deal with them before you start decorating – particularly if you're planning to paint the walls rather than papering over.

You can buy pre-mixed filler from a DIY shop. For a long crack, use a Stanley knife to dig it out and create a v-shaped groove to take the filler. With a smaller hole, make sure it's clear of debris and vacuum out any dust. Spray the crack with water so the filler doesn't dry out. Use a filler knife to spread it into the groove or hole until it's full and the surface is slightly raised. Wait until completely dry and then sand smooth.

FLOORING ADVICE

Q I want to change my bathroom floor but I'm on a budget. What low-cost bathroom flooring would you recommend?

A Vinyl tiles come in at the cheapest, and they are the easiest to fit since they're essentially large, durable stickers. Wood-effect tiles are handsome and warm-looking, waterproof and fuss-free, as well as easy to keep clean. Vinyl click tiles offer striking results, and are perfect for DIYers without an extensive toolkit.

Arteak Castano wood-effect tiles, £19.20 per m², Porcelain Superstore

Ambient Click vinyl in Grey Slate, £35.49 per m², Quick-Step

GoodHome Poprock black and white mosaic effect self-adhesive vinyl tile, £16.90 for pack of 14, B&Q

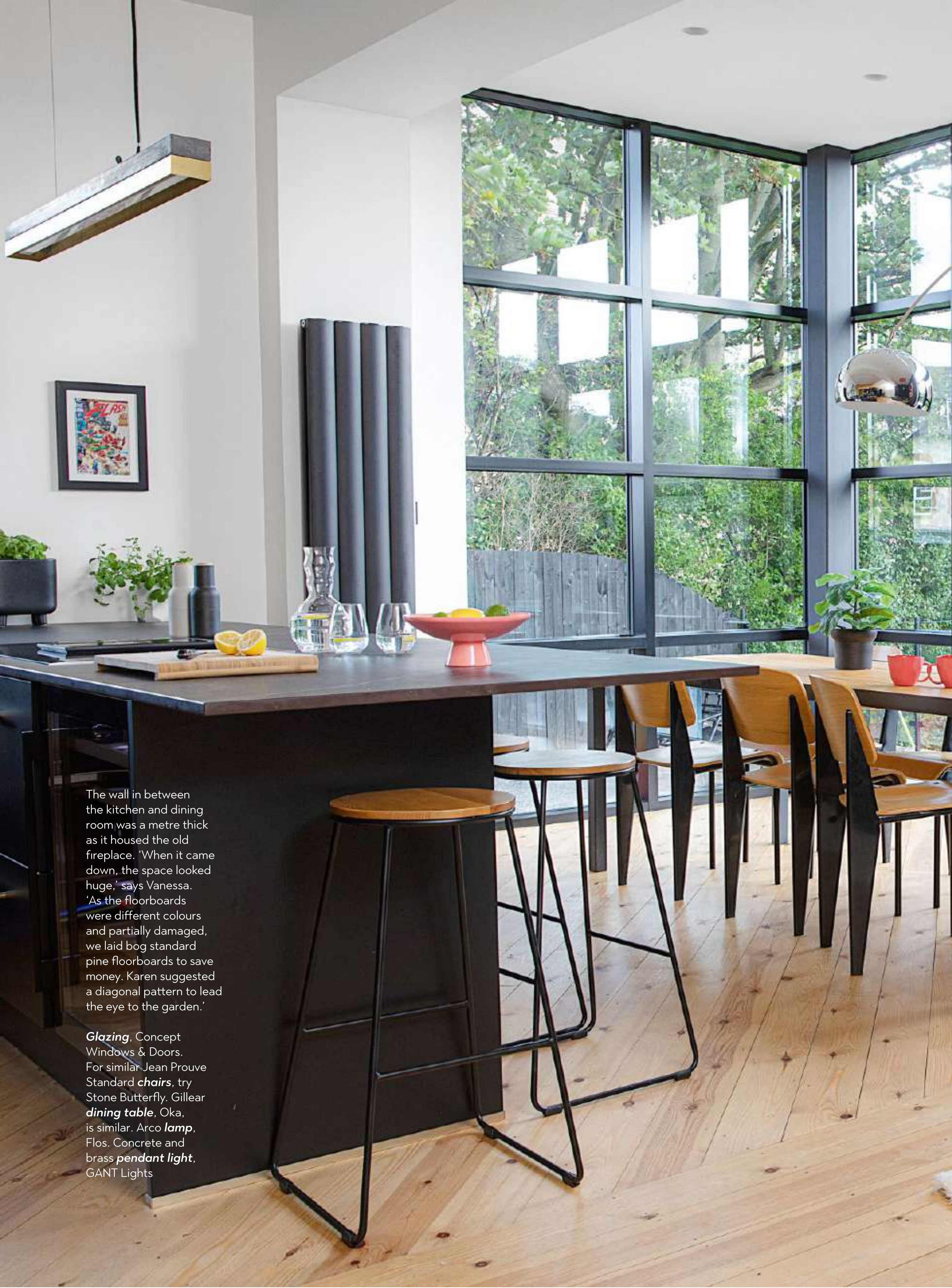
PHOTOGRAPHS **KATIE LEE (LEFT), LEIGH CLAPP (TOP)**

STYLE ADVICE

Q Help! I want a dark grey panelled wall in our master bedroom, but am struggling with what colour the remaining walls and furniture should be. What should I go for?

A With the panelled wall being the focal point of your bedroom, I'd go with pure white on the other three walls. This will create a glamorous yet relaxing scheme. When it comes to the furniture, a wood finish will add a touch of warmth to the scheme, as well as texture.

Wall painted in Scree Absolute matt emulsion, £48.50 for 2.5ltrs, Little Greene



The wall in between the kitchen and dining room was a metre thick as it housed the old fireplace. ‘When it came down, the space looked huge,’ says Vanessa. ‘As the floorboards were different colours and partially damaged, we laid bog standard pine floorboards to save money. Karen suggested a diagonal pattern to lead the eye to the garden.’

Glazing, Concept Windows & Doors. For similar Jean Prouve Standard ***chairs***, try Stone Butterfly. Gillear ***dining table***, Oka, is similar. Arco ***lamp***, Flos. Concrete and brass ***pendant light***, GANT Lights

EXTENDED PERIOD HOUSE

PUSHING THE limit

Using an interiors expert taught Vanessa and Andy to be bold and brave when redesigning their Edwardian semi

Vanessa and Andy Roberts are proof that perseverance pays off. Buying their first home in 2012, the couple managed to secure their ideal property – a two-bedroom converted coach house in Harrogate – after writing a letter to the owners begging to buy it. 'The listed building next door was a squat but was eventually redeveloped into luxury apartments, making our home more desirable,' says Vanessa. 'By creating an outdoor kitchen in the courtyard and living through the building work next door, we increased its value, allowing us to plough money into our next project.'

Soon, they came across a substantial six-bedroom four-storey Edwardian semi in the same town. It was one of eight built by the same architect and had been converted back into a house from three flats around 20 years ago. 'The work had been badly done,' says Vanessa. 'There was a very strange first-floor lean-to sunroom, the long, thin kitchen had no link with the garden, and the entire rear of the house felt very dark as it faces north east. But with 3,000 square feet to play with, there was lots of potential, and as the house was close to being repossessed, we were able to strike a good deal.'

As soon as the pair moved in, they had grand plans for the rear of the house. 'Initially we got planning permission to put the kitchen in the basement and have a mezzanine above with a big flight of stairs,' says Vanessa. 'However, when the

Left The couple experimented with a new limewash paint to add texture to this corner. The bespoke artwork features the same coral paint used around the house.

Walls ***painted*** in Poppy Seed Limewash, Abigail Ahern. ***Artwork***, Andy Welland. Luciano ***sofa***, Made. ***Pendant light***, HouseOf

Below 'The brass cupboard handles were our must-have splurge. We picked them before we'd even designed the kitchen,' says Vanessa

Brass ***bar handles***, Dowsing & Reynolds

builder came to properly cost it, rather than a finger-in-the-air job, it became astronomical and we had to rein in our plans.'

To create the open-plan kitchen-diner, the old kitchen and dining room were knocked through and the entire back of the house was rebuilt with the existing York stone and lots of glass, leading out to a new 70-square-metre structural patio. 'Our glazing manufacturer suggested a commercial aluminium curtain walling system as a budget alternative to Crittall windows for the six-metre-wide opening,' says Vanessa. 'It cost around £15,000 as opposed to £40,000+ for the real thing.' On the first floor, two small rear bedrooms, a bathroom, corridor and sunroom were transformed into a stunning L-shaped master bedroom with en suite and a quirky reading nook cum office overlooking the garden and church.

Prior to the major building work starting, the family lived in the house for three years, replacing windows, rewiring, adding radiators and sanding floors. However, Vanessa and son Harrison stayed with family for six weeks when the dusty structural work began, leaving Andy to brave it alone on site.

Hiring interior designer Karen Knox of Making Spaces before the architect and builder came on board was a shrewd move. 'She really thought about how we'd use each room and how the space would flow,' says Vanessa. 'People imagine interior design to be all about cushions and paint colours, but Karen's mind is so practical. As soon as she walks in a room she'll instantly notice the position of light switches, how the door opens, if the carpet needs replacing and even whether it's worth moving a radiator to free up space for a future wardrobe. Paint colour is the last thing on her mind!'

Karen's first task was tackling rooms at the front of the house. 'She suggested wrapping the entire drawing room and guest bedroom in a bold wallpaper and embracing the dark side,' says Vanessa. 'Without her we probably would've just wallpapered the chimney breast. She really pushed us creatively and we got braver the longer we worked with her.'

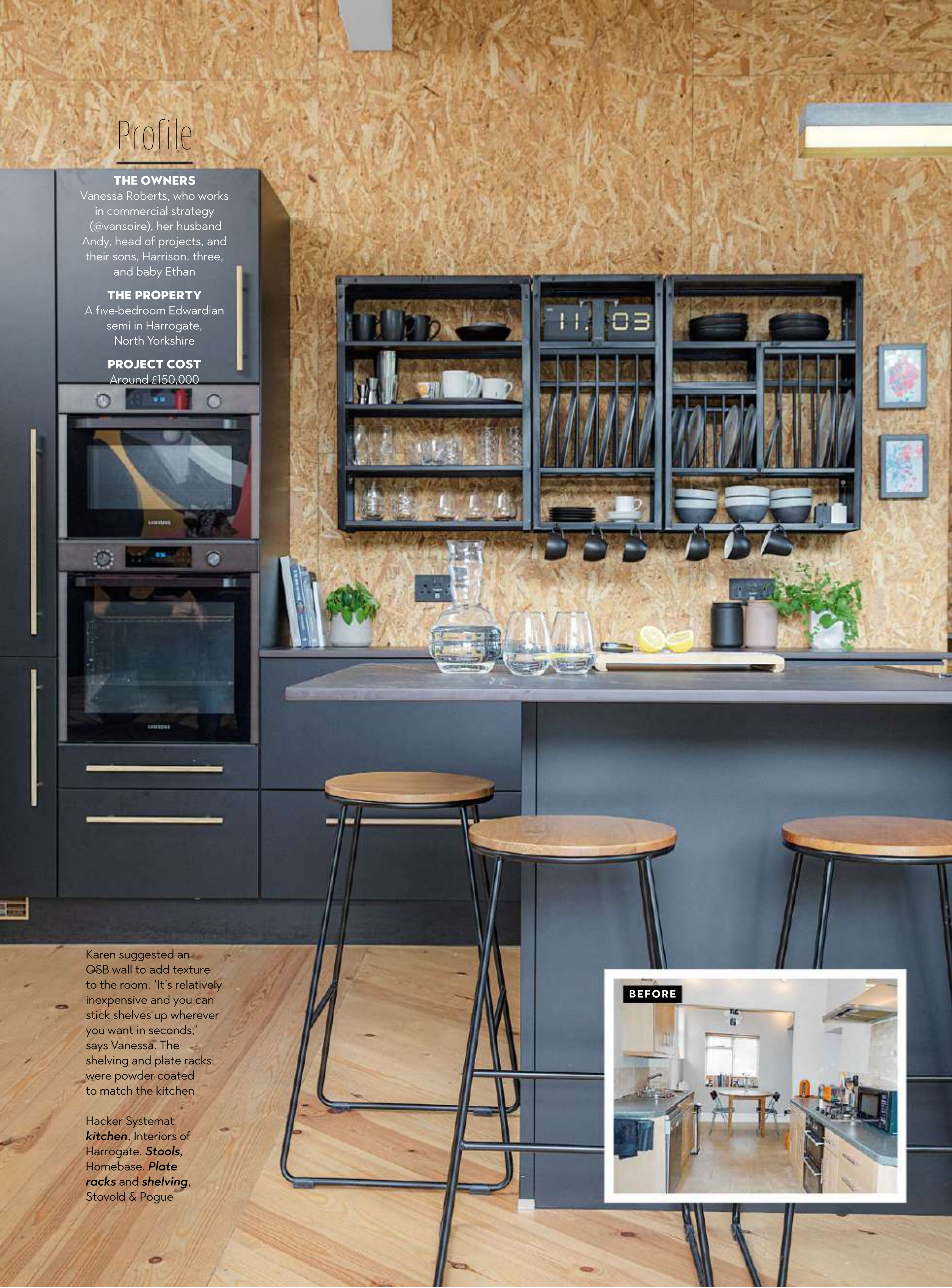
Naturally there were challenges during the project. 'Our builder discovered a '70s steel beam that was too small to hold up the building and the mortar in supporting pillars had crumbled,' says Vanessa. 'A steel company arrived the next day with a crane and a lot of beams as they were genuinely concerned the whole house might fall down!'

Balancing the budget inevitably involved making compromises. 'One of the biggest costs was the glazing as every window has been replaced with double-glazed heritage replicas at the front and aluminium at the back,' says Vanessa. 'I totally underestimated the cost of buying the other stuff you need to bring a scheme together, like rugs and furniture. However, the kitchen was one of the savviest rooms as the back wall is OSB and the floor is just pine floorboards.'

The couple spent more time sourcing the kitchen than any other part of the build. 'Initially we had our hearts set on a black Ikea kitchen made from recycled bottle tops, but our builder refused to work with a flat pack,' she says. 'Apparently there isn't much of a service gap and their non-standard unit sizes limit you to Ikea appliances. Instead we opted for a pre-built German kitchen from a local shop that took less time to install and had the option of matt black inside the cupboards too. By the time you'd factored in labour for building the flat pack, the price difference was marginal.'

Although the couple have sold their house and started renovating properties more seriously in a bid to eventually buy a chalet in the Alps, they've learned a lot from the project. 'Don't worry about other people's opinions as taste is so personal and changes with time,' says Vanessa. 'Once you start tapping into that creative bravery, it can take you in any given direction. As long as it makes you feel happy, that's all that matters.'

WORDS **KAREN WILSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **KATIE LEE**



Profile

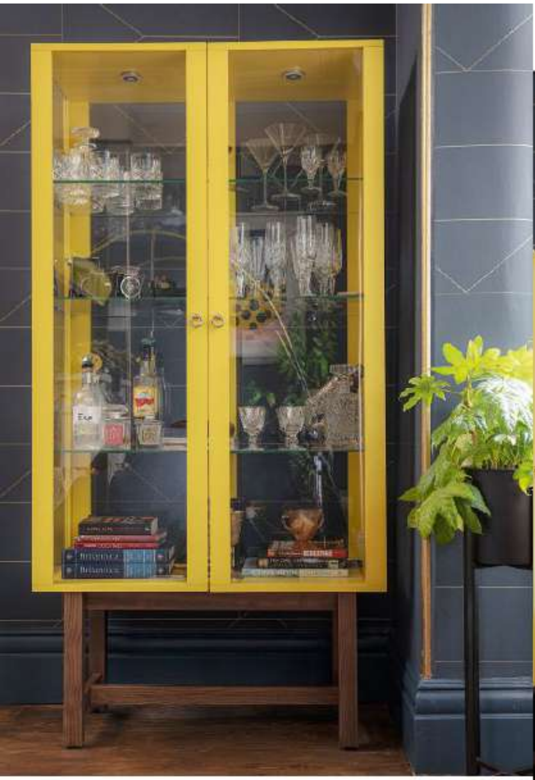
THE OWNERS
Vanessa Roberts, who works in commercial strategy (@vansoire), her husband Andy, head of projects, and their sons, Harrison, three, and baby Ethan

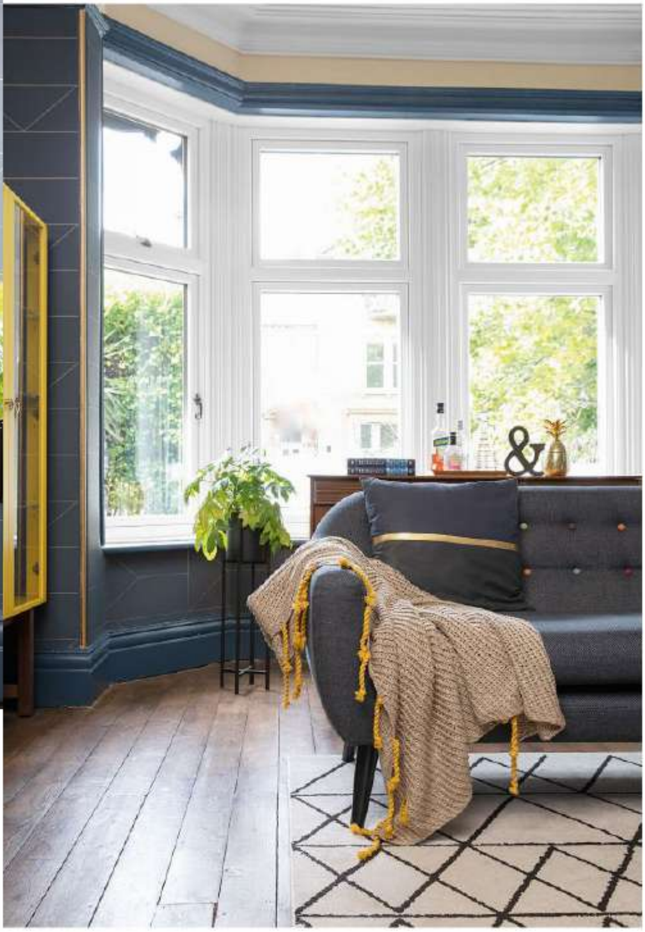
THE PROPERTY
A five-bedroom Edwardian semi in Harrogate, North Yorkshire

PROJECT COST
Around £150,000

Karen suggested an OSB wall to add texture to the room. 'It's relatively inexpensive and you can stick shelves up wherever you want in seconds,' says Vanessa. The shelving and plate racks were powder coated to match the kitchen

Hacker Systemat ***kitchen***, Interiors of Harrogate. ***Stools,*** Homebase. ***Plate racks*** and ***shelving***, Stovold & Pogue





Above and right 'We love a colour pop,' says Vanessa. 'After all, it's hard to be brave with neutrals. We spent two days scraping off bitumen from the original floorboards before sanding them, The dark Jacobean oak stain has come up really well.'

Stockolm ***cabinet***, Ikea. Mid-century ***sideboard***, Ebay. ***Cushions***, H&M. ***Throw***, Sainsbury's

BRIGHT SPARK

Light up a dark corner with one of these stylish designs

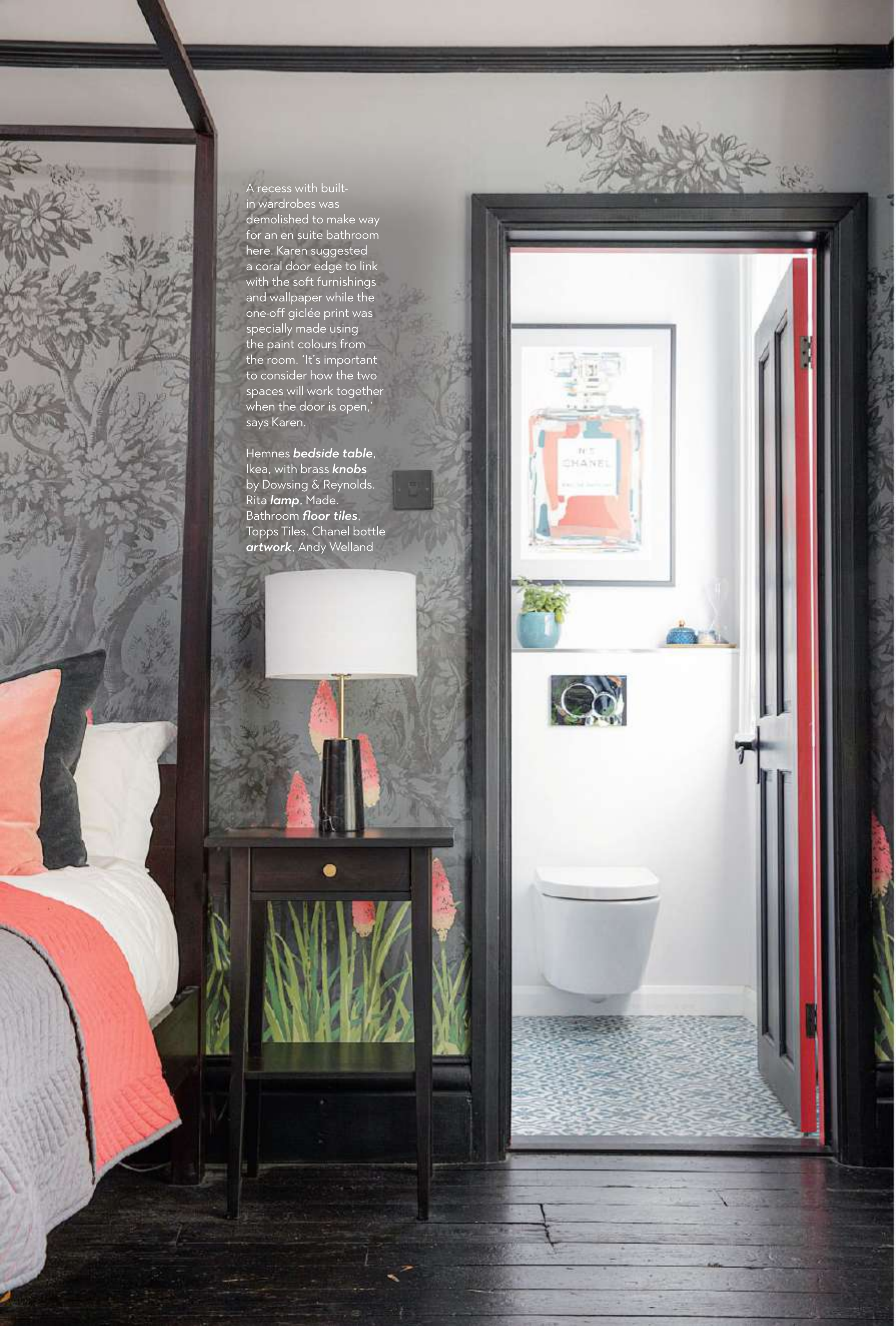
1

2

1 Mercer black arm table lamp, £175, Beaumonde
2 Lamp with black ceramic base, £89.99, Zara Home
3 Arezzo round glass table lamp in green marble, £69, Cult Furniture
4 Greywashed textured wooden table lamp, £150, Cox & Cox

3

4


A recess with built-in wardrobes was demolished to make way for an en suite bathroom here. Karen suggested a coral door edge to link with the soft furnishings and wallpaper while the one-off giclée print was specially made using the paint colours from the room. 'It's important to consider how the two spaces will work together when the door is open,' says Karen.

Hemnes ***bedside table***, Ikea, with brass ***knobs*** by Dowsing & Reynolds. Rita ***lamp***, Made. Bathroom ***floor tiles***, Topps Tiles. Chanel bottle ***artwork***, Andy Welland

Below 'Karen encouraged me to use the beautiful wallpaper everywhere so the room feels enveloped in it,' says Vanessa. Upper Brook Street Minuit ***wallpaper*** and Jack Black ***paint***, both Little Greene. Goa ***bed***, Maisons du Monde. Eos feather ***shade***, Nordic. Adum ***rug***, Ikea

'This space off the bedroom was the perfect home office during the pandemic,' says Vanessa. 'Everybody asked where I'd got my background from on Teams meetings!'

Chairs, Zara. ***Coffee table*** and ***rug***, both Made

LOUNGE IN STYLE

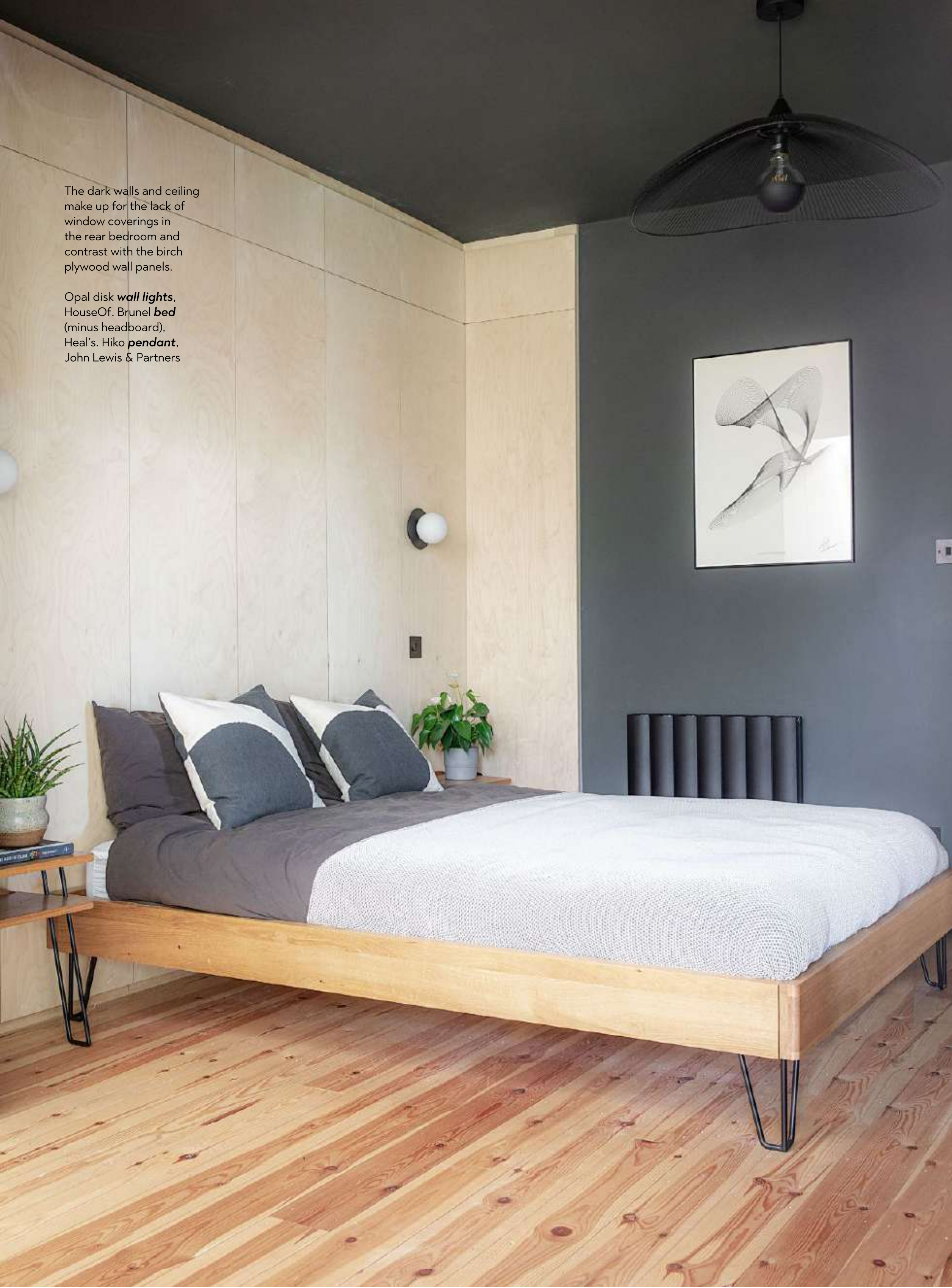
Pick your perfect spot and sit a spell with a comfy lounge chair

Squishbag chair, £695, Loaf

Faux shearling chair, £199.99, Zara Home

Eos sofa armchair, £745, Case Furniture

Zuiver Spike lounge chair, £339, Cuckooland



The dark walls and ceiling make up for the lack of window coverings in the rear bedroom and contrast with the birch plywood wall panels.

Opal disk ***wall lights***, HouseOf. Brunel ***bed*** (minus headboard), Heal's. Hiko ***pendant***, John Lewis & Partners

Costs & contacts

Building work	£75,000
Glazing	£25,000
Kitchen and appliances	£16,000
Bathrooms	£15,000
Furniture and décor	£10,000
Bespoke joinery	£6,000
Professional fees & planning	£3,000

Construction JWI Builders, 07772 489109, jwibuilders.co.uk
Architect White Rose Architects, 01423 313579, wrarchitectural.co.uk
Interior design Karen Knox of Making Spaces, 07796 670837, making-spaces.net
Kitchen Interiors of Harrogate, 01423 528885, ioh.co
Glazing Concept Windows & Doors, 01423 326605, conceptwindowsltd.co.uk
Bespoke Joinery Lomax Contractors, 07855 369698

Left Vanessa painted this entire room dark grey to disguise the mixture of eaves, angles and sloped ceilings. A copper-painted panel with copper patina solution creates a stunning headboard, and Karen sourced a beautiful copper threaded rug to tie everything together.

Walls, floor and ceiling ***painted*** in Madison Grey, Abigail Ahern. Copper-effect ***paint***, Craig & Rose. Landsdowne ***bed***, Made. Bubble ***chandelier***, Dowsing & Reynolds. Madmen Soho copper ***rug***, Louis de Poortere. Float copper ***wall lights***, Nordlux

Left and above 'I wanted a dark and moody hotel room feel in here,' says Vanessa. 'As it's quite a big room, you can get away with it. The large format terrazzo floor tiles were the starting point – they're like a zoomed in version of the patio tiles – and Karen suggested adding warmth with the wood vanity unit, terracotta stool and amber bottles.'

Bath, British Baths. ***Floor tiles***, Petri range by Grestec. ***Vanity unit*** and ***basins***, Tikamoon

PROJECT TIMELINE

BOUGHT HOUSE
June 2016

REPLACED WINDOWS, HIRED INTERIOR DESIGNER
Summer 2016

COMPLETED DRAWING ROOM
Spring 2017

COMPLETED GUEST BEDROOM
Winter 2017

FINISHED TOP FLOOR NURSERY
Early 2018

GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR RECONFIGURATION BEGAN
January 2019

BUILD WORK COMPLETED
Summer 2019

EN SUITES

WORTH GETTING UP FOR

Turn your smallest bathroom into a five-star hotel worthy sanctuary or, at the very least, a nice break from the kids' toys and wet towels, with our guide to en suite success...

Back in the day, an en suite was the last word in luxury. Not only were they rarer than a hen in hosiery in 'normal' homes, there were also plenty of decent hotel rooms sans en suite. Just imagine. Now it's rare to find a house without at least one en suite, but that doesn't mean they're always luxurious. Some are so small, 'cupboard' would be a more accurate description, while others are just plain grim. The good news is that small can equal beautiful. And, even better, small can also equal cheaper, on tile and paint quantities alone.

If you're adding a new en suite the budget needs to be a little more generous but there are several ways to make savings. Starting with the positioning. Pitch your new bathroom above the kitchen sink, or adjacent to the main family bathroom, and the distance your plumber has to run new pipework will be much shorter (and less disruptive on the decorating front in the rooms it cuts through). Getting close to the external soil pipe has similar advantages. If you're in the throes of a renovation, you can often make savings by using excess materials, like paint, tiles and plaster, left over from other rooms.

When it comes to buying bathroom fittings, doing the legwork, or rather finger-work, yourself by trawling online for the best prices can result in huge savings compared to getting everything from one source. Don't forget to search Facebook Marketplace and local Freecycle sites, too. Not all 'white' sanitaryware is the same white and the difference can be all-too-obvious in close quarters. Instead consider fittings that aren't designed to match, like a concrete or coloured statement basin with a black-framed shower enclosure and standard white loo.

Whether your en suite is new or existing, space-saving will most likely top your agenda. The smallest recommended footprint is a miserly 1.8x0.8m, which is better than nothing but far from ideal. You can make small spaces a little more comfortable by switching inward opening doors for pocket doors or barn-style sliders (or no door at all). Cloakroom-size basins can save precious inches, but do make sure they're big enough for face and teeth washing. Also, think about tanking the room, wet-room style, but only if there's enough room to keep towels and loo roll away from the shower spray. If you prefer the cocooning experience of an enclosure, go for inward opening pivot doors or sliders.

Finally, move mountains to ensure there's a decent amount of daylight in there. Go upwards with a skylight or sun tunnel if your house is attached or borrow light from adjoining rooms via internal windows if necessary. Nothing makes a small en suite feel more spacious than a dose of natural daylight.

Check you out

Keep control of toiletries and toothbrushes with a slimline mirror cabinet

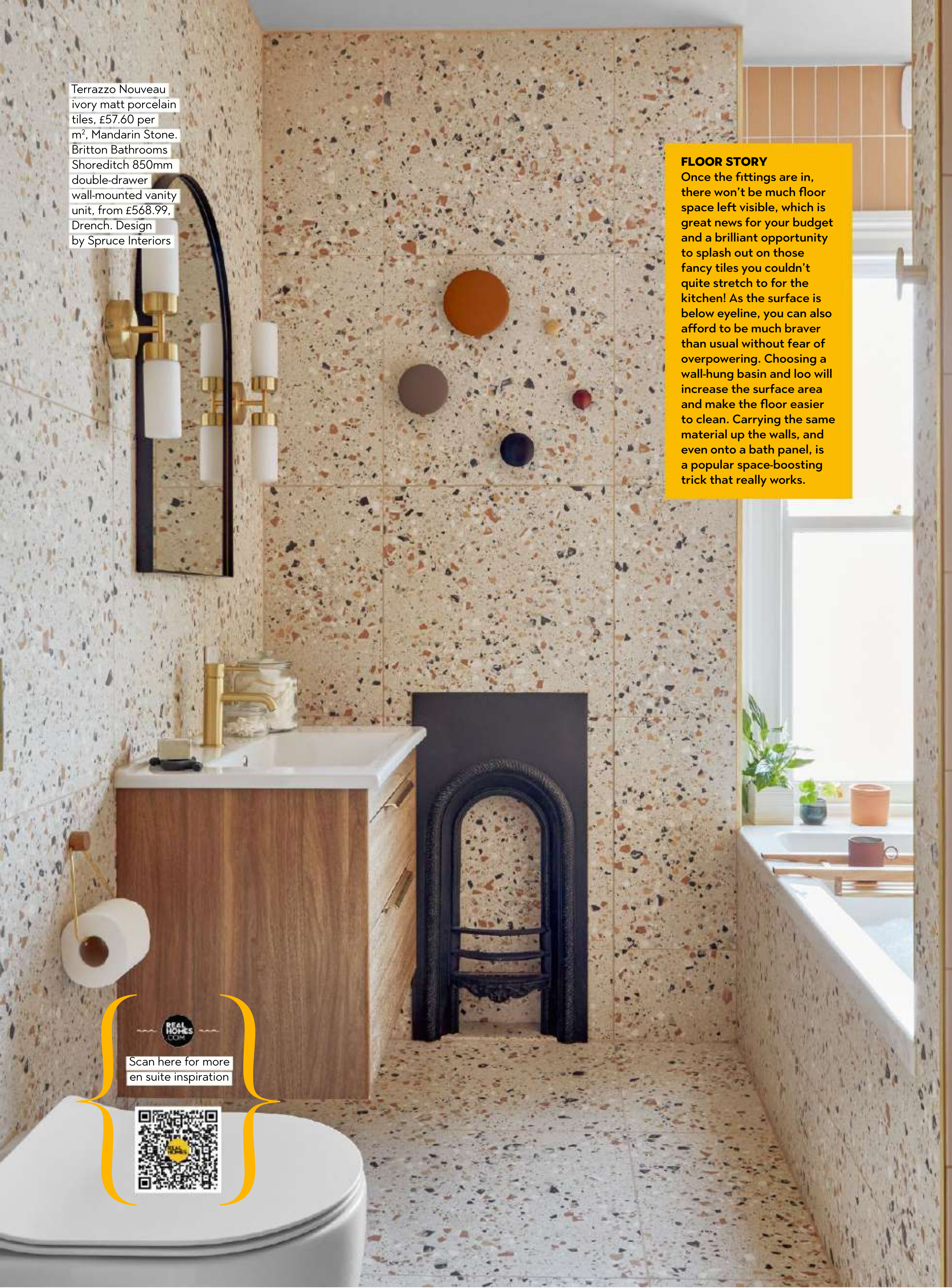
Anderson in oak effect chevron, £85, Next

Caroga in grey, £46.99, Wayfair

Wireworks 550 in natural oak, £303, Nest

Enhet in anthracite, £50, Ikea

WORDS **LINDA CLAYTON**
PHOTOGRAPH **RALPH BARKLAM (SPRUCE INTERIORS)**



Terrazzo Nouveau ivory matt porcelain tiles, £57.60 per m^2, Mandarin Stone. Britton Bathrooms Shoreditch 850mm double-drawer wall-mounted vanity unit, from £568.99, Drench. Design by Spruce Interiors

FLOOR STORY

Once the fittings are in, there won't be much floor space left visible, which is great news for your budget and a brilliant opportunity to splash out on those fancy tiles you couldn't quite stretch to for the kitchen! As the surface is below eyeline, you can also afford to be much braver than usual without fear of overpowering. Choosing a wall-hung basin and loo will increase the surface area and make the floor easier to clean. Carrying the same material up the walls, and even onto a bath panel, is a popular space-boosting trick that really works.

Scan here for more en suite inspiration

Right Basin, £280; WC, £253, with close-coupled cistern, £222, all the Wynwood range by Heritage Bathrooms

OPEN ACCESS

If you can't use the loo without locking the door, an open-plan en suite isn't for you. Privacy aside, open-plan en suites boast multiple benefits. They're the best way to maximise the available space and light in both rooms and are particularly effective if there's only one window. They're also great for showing off a designer bath. A decent extractor will take care of moisture concerns – pop it above the shower to remove steam at source. And if you can tuck the toilet behind a small stud wall or even a freestanding screen, do it!

PHOTOGRAPHS **OLI DOUGLAS (MANDARIN STONE); PAUL CRAIG (WEST ONE)**

Cosmic Ivory porcelain floor tiles, £45.60 per m^2. Pigment Mocha Gloss ceramic wall tiles, £22.71 per m^2, Mandarin Stone

TEXTURAL TREATS

It's easy to go overboard in a small space – one too many design features or colours and chaos descends. Instead try to build up subtle layers of interest, adding in different textures for a look that's engaging in a sophisticated way. Think fluted or scalloped concrete basins, ribbed glass shower screens and on-trend terrazzo, but balanced with an expansive area of plain tiles to keep it all calm. Remember, just like a little black dress, black brassware goes with everything and is perfect for diluting the bling of bright brass finishes.

Roman Liberty black grid panel, £673; Duravit ME by Starck WC, £466; 5th Avenue shower brassware in matt black, £1,269; Maté hexagon floor tiles, £165.50 per box of 21 tiles; metro wall tiles in matt white, £69 per m^2, West One Bathrooms

TOP TIP

Showering next to a window? Keep splashes contained and protect your modesty with a simple frosted glass screen, hinged for easy cleaning.

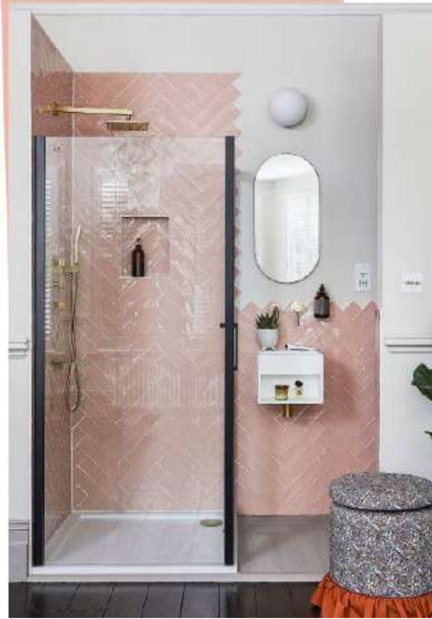
A similar en suite by Violet & George would start from £12,000

MINDFUL STORAGE
Planning in sufficient storage is important but do be realistic in an en suite; this is not the place for bulk-buy loo roll or spare guest towels. Think about what you use on a daily basis and stash it close to hand. Utilise the depth of any stud walls by adding storage niches (inside the shower, put them furthest away from the spray to keep contents dry-ish). Mirrored cabinets can also be sunk into the wall above the basin, so they don't loom over you while you brush your teeth.

Marion Jacobs

ECOMMERCE TRADING MANAGER

'This en suite is a newly created space inside our master bedroom, so I decided to go open-plan. This means neither space feels cramped or compromised and I love the boutique hotel vibe it provides. The en suite is only 2.4x1m so it had to have a strong presence in the room to not look like an afterthought – this is where the pink tiles from Ca Pietra and black shower from Victorian Plumbing really pack a punch. Placing the tiles at an angle is a small twist but feels dynamic. I love that the stud wall doesn't go right to the ceiling, which again boosts that open vibe. The space is practical to use, despite its compactness. When planning an en suite, pick the three main things that are important to you and place on a mood board to see how they look together. And mark out your fittings within the space to see if they work functionally. I had to go back to the drawing board a few times as the things I initially chose were just too tight in the space. Think about how you move around and pay attention to the elbow and knee allowance around the toilet, sink and so on, so you're not crashing into things.'
Insta: @mjhousetohome



TOP TIP
A partial dividing wall that doubles as a headboard is the perfect way to provide privacy in an open-plan en suite. Add a storage niche for bedtime reading materials and a cute pop of colour.

Left Feature wall in Pink Skies and Tranquil Dawn (inset); bathroom walls in Misty Mirror and Borrowed Blue (rear), all matt emulsion at £30.04 for 2.5ltrs, Dulux

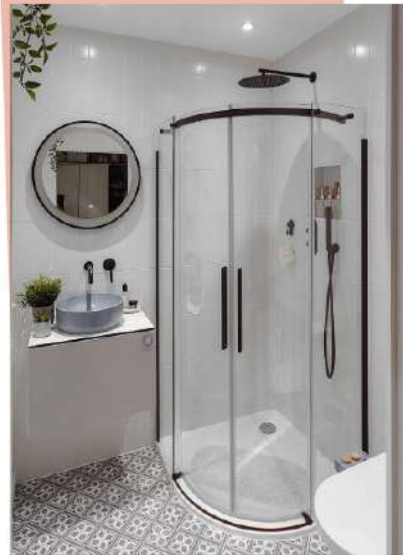
BEST LAID PLANS
Space, or a lack of it, can often dictate an en suite's layout, and if it's in a loft, there's a sloped ceiling to consider. Install fittings you use standing up (shower and basin) at the ceiling's highest point and those used mostly sitting or lying down (loo and bath) under the eaves. Precision planning helps. SketchUp is a brilliant online tool to use, but some bathroom companies also offer 3D plans for free – try victoriaplum.com.

Kura Dione-Warren & Mark Warren

DIVERSITY SPECIALIST & ARCHITECT

'This is our master en suite, which is entered from our bedroom via walk-in wardrobes. It didn't exist when we moved in – we stole 1.8x1.8m from the second master bedroom to create it. To maximise the tight space, we installed a pocket door and a quadrant shower, which provides a decent showering area without crowding out the toilet and basin. The wall-hung vanity – an Ikea hack by Mark – also makes the room appear more spacious and helps keep it all clutter-free. I picked the basin first, from Victoria Plum, and then found the floor tiles from Topps Tiles to match. Happily they were on sale! The basin and tiles are bold, so we kept the rest of the scheme pretty simple, again to reduce visual clutter. You can't see it here but there's a round window that lets in borrowed light from the bedroom and is Mark's favourite feature – he's all about the light. When we first moved in there just wasn't enough storage, so we also added a hidden shelf above the entrance door. We can both easily reach it – the height isn't an issue – but it means we have extra space for toiletries and cleaning products without impacting on the design at all.'

Insta: @the_warren_crew_at_52

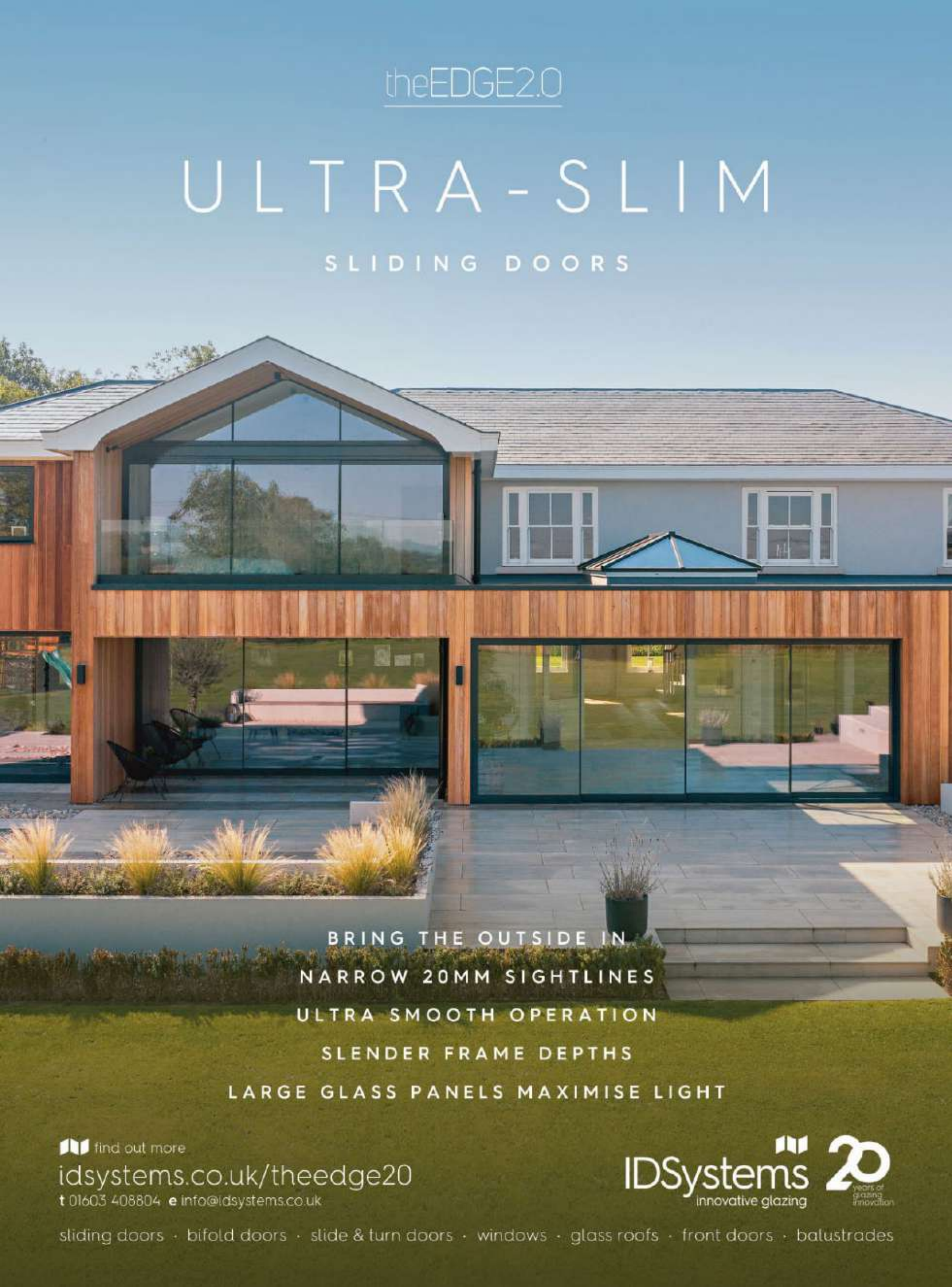


DOUBLE UP
Master en suites are generally designed for two. Double showers are a huge trend at the moment, and can cut the morning queue. Make sure there's enough hot water to meet demand, and the shower tray's waste trap is capable of handling high volumes of water. A double basin or vanity unit is also useful. Try to ensure sufficient elbow space between the two to maintain marital harmony!

A similar en suite by Kitesgrove would cost around £8,000

DON'T FORGET...
to belt out the shower tunes

Bluetooth shower speaker, £19.95, Rex London



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DREAM RELOCATION

SLOW living

After moving from London to the East Sussex countryside, Katy and John have filled their new home with sentimental items and considered touches

Nearly two years after Covid-19 brought 'normal' life to a standstill, most of us have realised a few things about the way we want to live, from changing careers to moving home. But fewer of us have actually acted on those realisations. For John and Katy, Covid was the push they needed to finally give up their life in London for a quieter one in the countryside. Moving with their three-year-old son Wilf, they were lucky enough to find their dream home in a stunning Victorian property on the edge of Eridge Park, complete with views across the historic estate and deer park. Since moving, they've started applying their considered style to their new home, choosing what's best for them and for the house. A kitchen renovation is planned, but for now, they're busy getting to know their new home and creating memories. We spoke to them about life in the country, embracing slow style, and how they've woven beautiful old pieces into their new space.

JOHN SAYS…

‘Stitches Farm House is a classic Victorian red brick farm house in the Abergavenny style. Part of the Abergavenny Estate on the edge of Eridge Park, it was built for the then farm manager in 1883. The main house, Eridge Castle, was built in exuberant Strawberry Hill Gothic style in 1787; our house references those architectural design details, featuring three Gothic, ecclesiastical-style windows, and ornate timber and tile work to the gables and roofline.

‘We wanted to make this a meaningful move, and we definitely see ourselves growing into this house over decades. We set our sights on a Victorian house – we appreciate them from a design point of view as they’re solid houses, well-proportioned, and built with high-quality, reliable materials.

‘We took our time getting to know the house – we wanted to do what was right for it and for us. All our work so far has been cosmetic, except for the garage. It has two storeys and the first floor was an old store room full of cobwebs and cardboard boxes. We turned it into a spacious studio with storage and it’s proved to be the perfect space from which to operate our business. We added Velux windows to the back – the view looking over the fields helps clear the mind.

‘Both of us have the same design philosophy. The things we have need to be as relevant today as they will be in 10 or 20 years. We try our best to upcycle, and we also have old pieces that mean a lot to us. I’d say we’re real hunter-gatherers! We’ll pick things up from the side of the road – it’s amazing what people throw away. We tend to gravitate towards Georgian, Victorian and mid-century pieces. Another thing that influences our style is budget – you’re forced to be a lot more creative and I think it results in a much more interesting outcome.

‘Living here and managing the house and garden has added a new dynamic to the everyday. Doing things like seeing to the paddocks and the hedges never feels like a chore. You’re helping to keep an historic house running, and it feels a bit like therapy. Since we moved from London, we’ve felt ourselves slowing down a little, in a good way.’

> ‘THE VIEW SOLD THE HOUSE TO US, AND THE FEELING YOU GET FROM BEING HERE – LIFE IS FAR SIMPLER’

KATY SAYS…

‘We’ve always thought we’d move to the countryside, but Covid cemented that decision. It made us wonder what we were waiting for. Our London flat sold quickly and we hadn’t quite found the house we wanted. We knew this area well, but never thought we’d be lucky enough to find a house for sale here at the right time. This property took a long time to secure, but as soon as we saw it, we totally fell for it. The view sold it to us straight away, and then we walked inside and loved every feature we saw. The previous owners had kitted it out quite simply – otherwise, we’d have needed to spend money undoing things. This way, we could just add our personality.

‘We want to live here for a while before making any major renovation decisions. As soon as we moved in, my mind was running away with ideas. So far, all the work has been cosmetic, but we plan to knock the dining room through to the kitchen – it’s the classic dream of wanting to be able to prep food and chat to people at the same time. The kitchen itself is lovely, and the decisions the previous owners made weren’t far off what we’d choose. We’ll add more cabinets to the other side for extra storage, as well as to integrate the fridge-freezer, and we’re considering bringing reclaimed stone back in through the flooring. There’s also a lovely cellar, so we’re thinking about how we can best use that. We’re always planning!

‘Design is about expressing our inner desires, letting heart and soul decide. It’s easy to be influenced by trends, but we naturally gravitate to design that lasts: made up of individual pieces that have meaning, form and function.

‘For me, the best things about the house are the aspect, the view, and the feeling you get from being here. There were a lot of pressures in running a shop in London, and I think we got out at the right time. It’s allowed us to think about our next steps for LPOL, which is kind of an odd privilege. We’ve already noticed a huge difference in the way we live. Raising a child still feels like we’re tag-teaming at times, but it’s far simpler doing it here. Wilf is enjoying the great outdoors. It feels cosy and familiar because it’s the childhood John and I both had – it definitely feels like home.’

PROJECT TIMELINE

SOLD LONDON FLAT
June 2020

COMPLETED ON THIS HOUSE
October 2020

MOVED IN
October 2020

RENOVATED STUDIO
March 2021

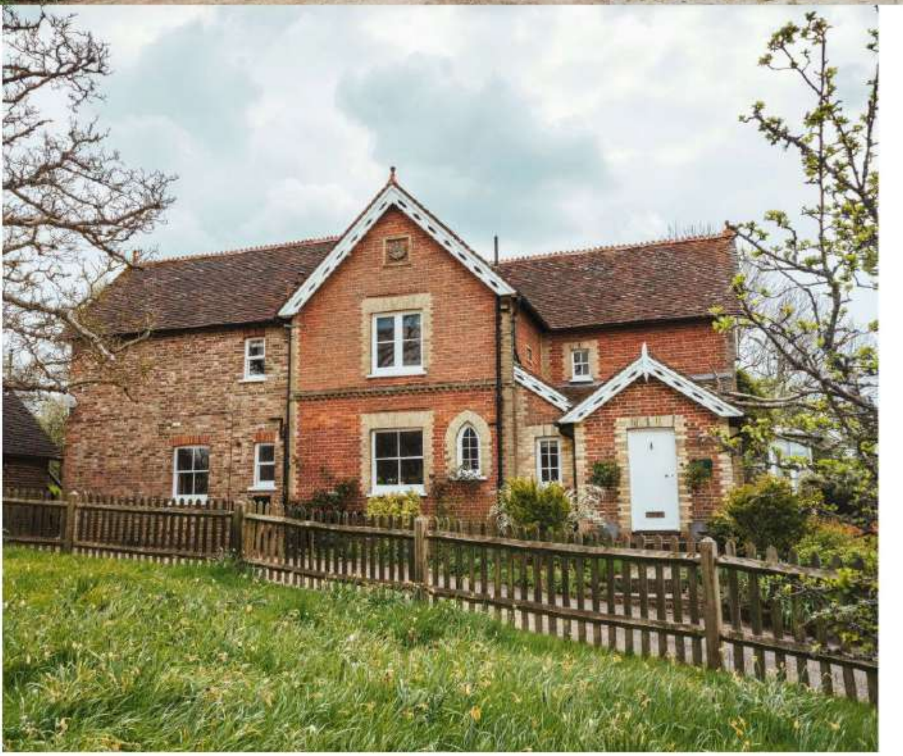
PLANNING TO RENOVATE KITCHEN
2022

WORDS **ELLEN FINCH** PHOTOGRAPHS **SALTWICK MEDIA**

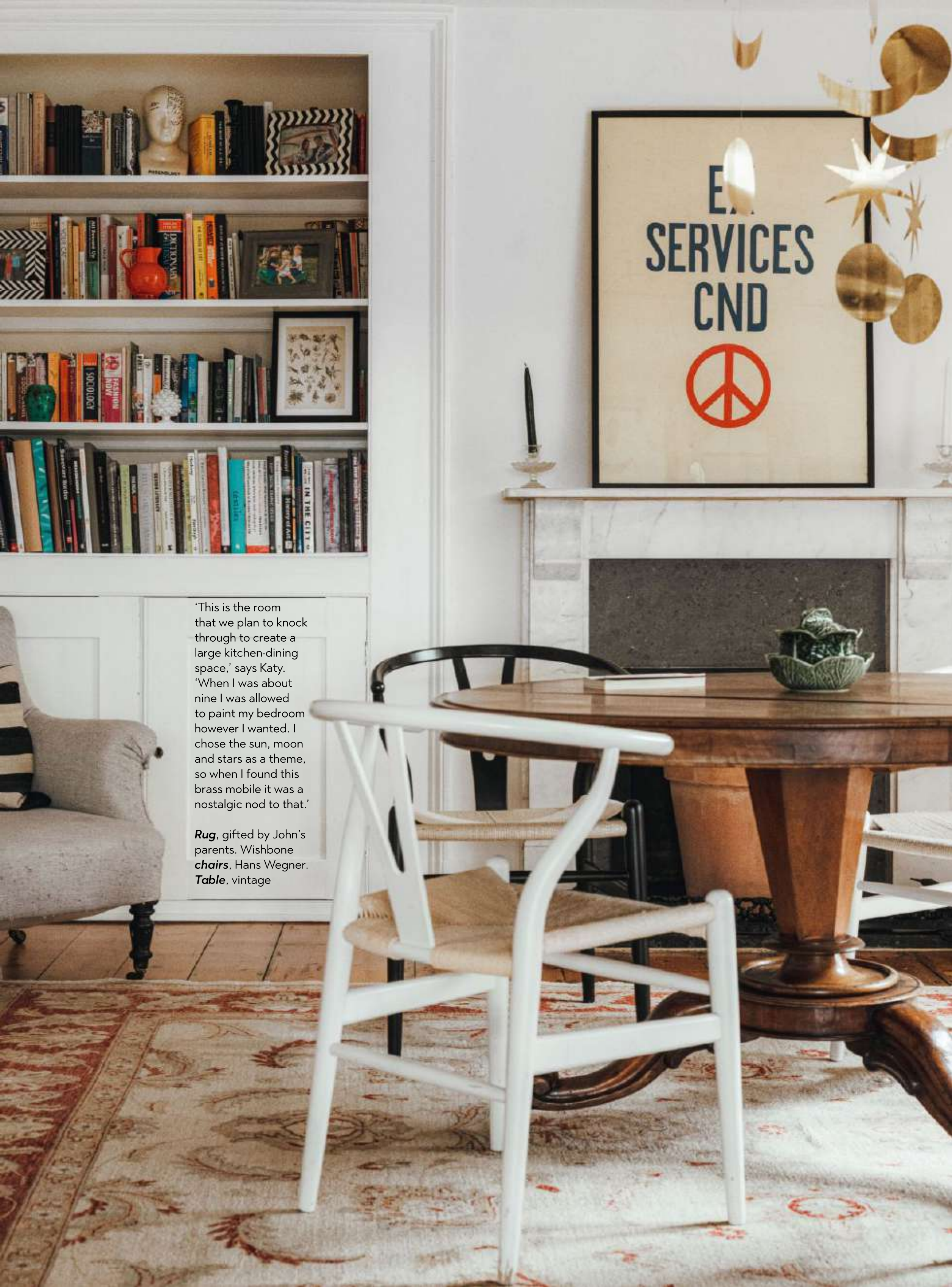
Profile

THE OWNERS
Katy and John Maskell Bell, who own sustainable leather and upcycled goods brand LPOL (lpol.co.uk), live with their son Wilf, three, and their cats Monty and Tibbs

THE PROPERTY
A four-bed Victorian detached red brick house in Eridge, East Sussex



Clockwise from left Built for a farm manager on the Abergavenny Estate, the house dates from 1883 and references the Strawberry Hill-esque Gothic-style of the now demolished Eridge Castle. John and Katy were drawn to its historic charm and the stunning views



'This is the room that we plan to knock through to create a large kitchen-dining space,' says Katy. 'When I was about nine I was allowed to paint my bedroom however I wanted. I chose the sun, moon and stars as a theme, so when I found this brass mobile it was a nostalgic nod to that.'

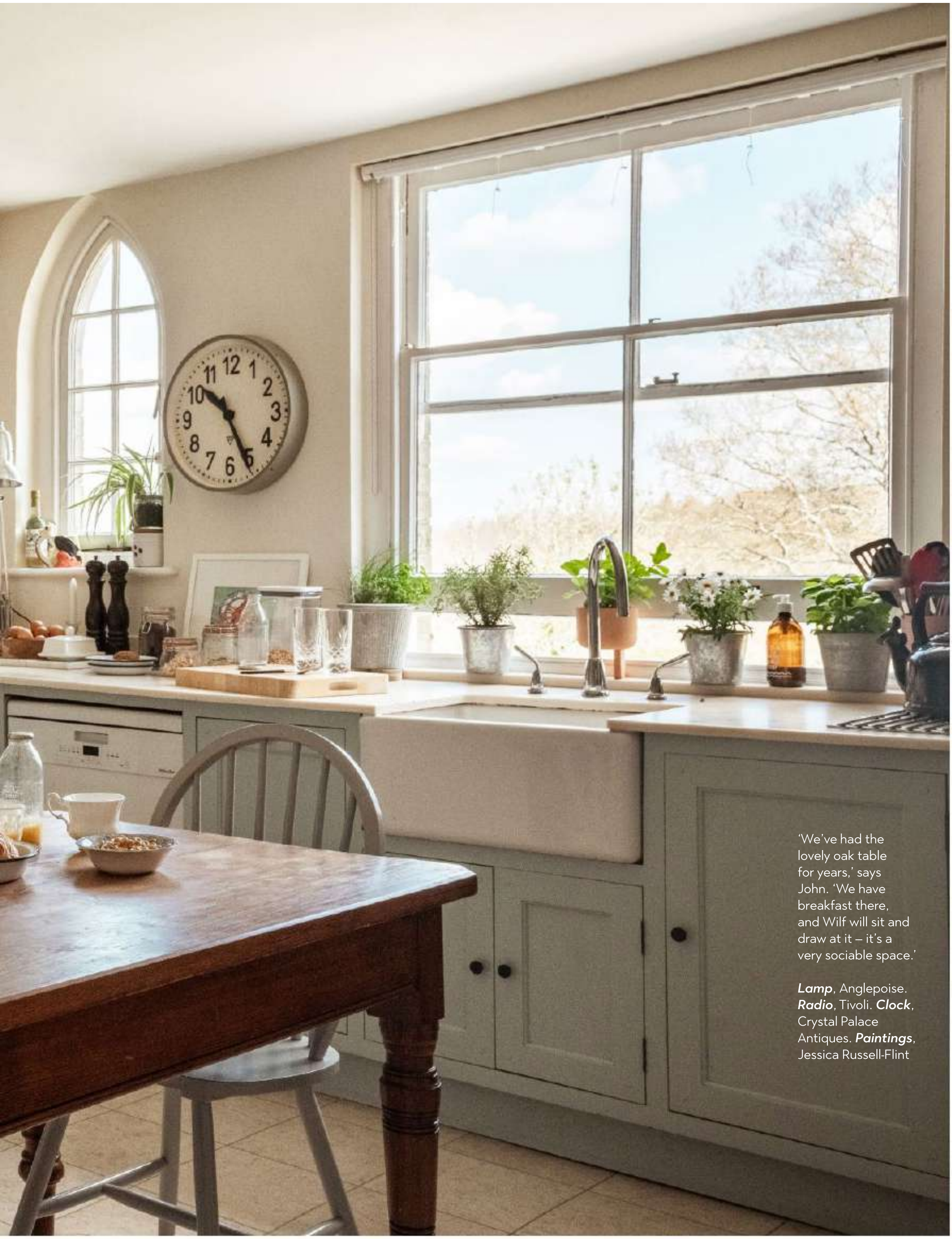
Rug, gifted by John's parents. Wishbone ***chairs***, Hans Wegner. ***Table***, vintage

Clockwise from top 'The previous owners left us the woodburning stove – we moved in over winter and it was immediately on!' says Katy. 'I bought the rug with some money I inherited from my granny, I wanted something timeless that could become a family heirloom.'

Sofas, Facebook Marketplace and Ebay. ***Rug***, The Swan at Tetsworth Antiques. Round ***mirror***, Franklins Interiors of Hove. ***Candlesticks***, ROOMS of Clapton. ***Painting***, Tat London. ***Console table***, reclaimed oak plinths

Amelia's top tip

If you're lucky enough to have beautiful views from your kitchen window, position your sink beneath it so you can take in the scenery while washing up. A central farmhouse-style table will turn your kitchen into a sociable space.

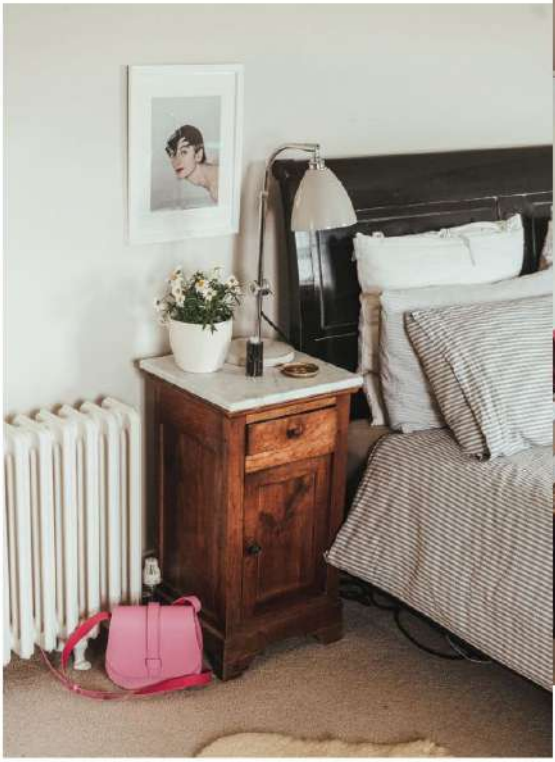


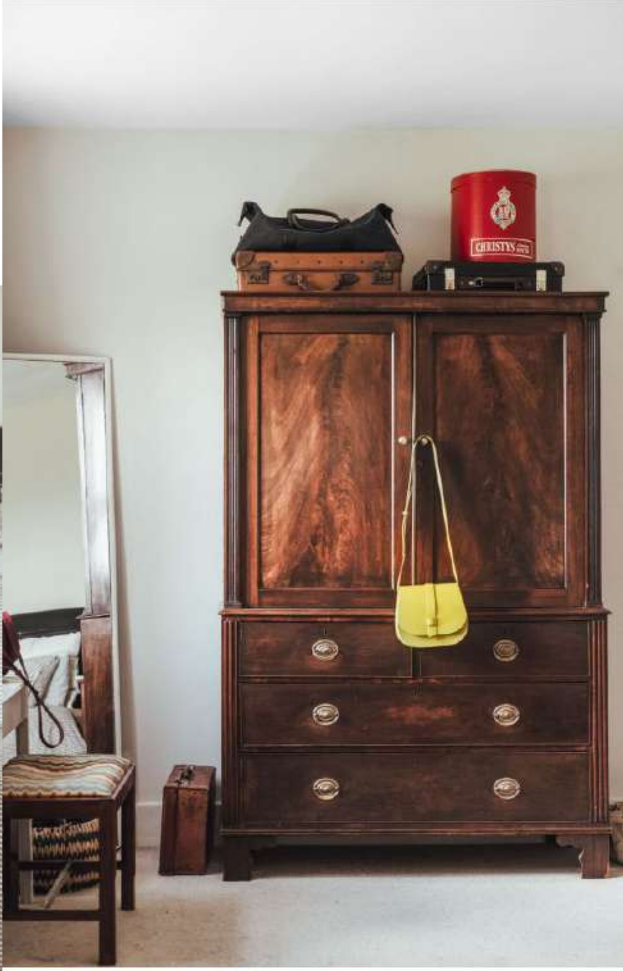
'We've had the lovely oak table for years,' says John. 'We have breakfast there, and Wilf will sit and draw at it – it's a very sociable space.'

Lamp, Anglepoise. ***Radio***, Tivoli. ***Clock***, Crystal Palace Antiques. ***Paintings***, Jessica Russell-Flint

Left, below and right 'The previous owners painted this room in Farrow & Ball's French Gray, which is a very easy colour to get on with, so we just moved our furniture in,' says Katy. 'The floorboards underneath are original, so we are debating whether to take the carpet up.'

Armchair, Muller Van Severen. New York ***photograph*** by Katy. ***Bedside tables***, from Katy's parents. ***Lamps***, Original BTC. ***Picture*** beside bed, vintage fair. Try Loveantiques for a ***wardrobe***





PICTURE PERFECT

Take your art from life, like Katy has, with an atmospheric streetscape

Townhouse framed art print, from £23, Abstract House

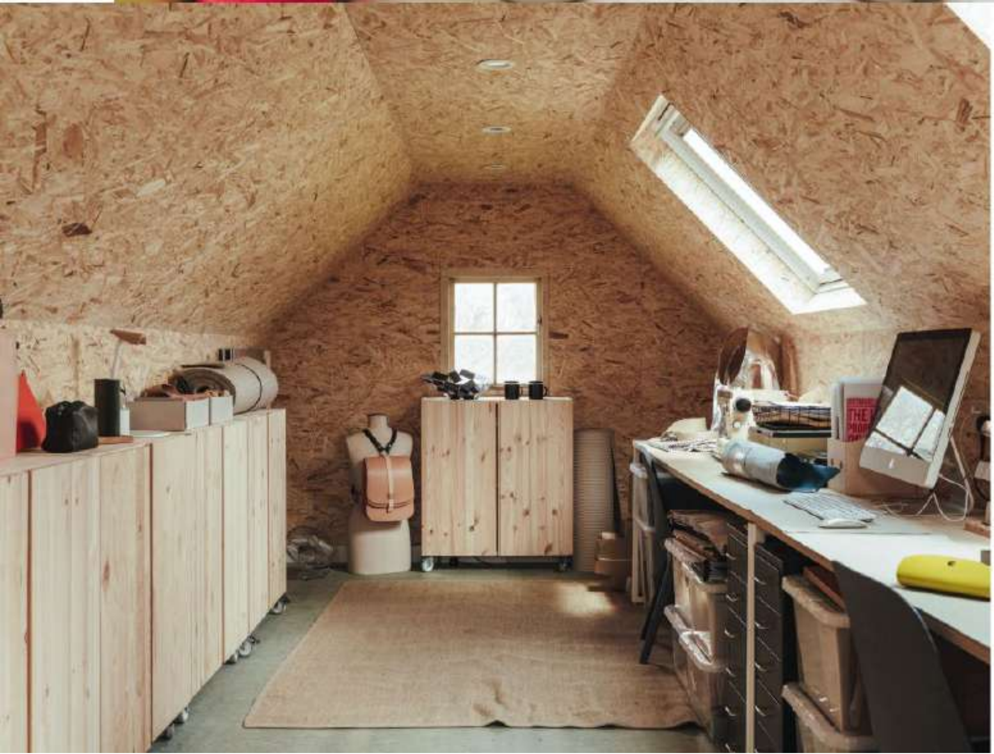
Straight Ahead poster, from £12.95, Desenio

Salk Institute, 1983, by Jordan J. Lloyd, from £29, Colorgraph.co

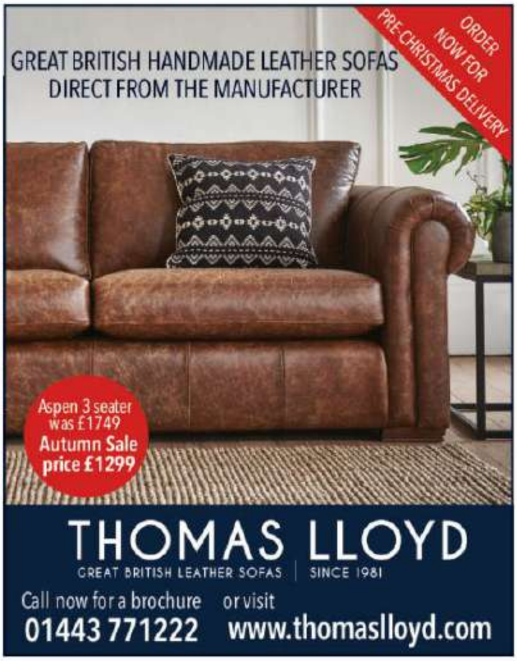
Venice street art print by Nancy Lova, from £18, I am Fy

Contacts

Main contractor D.J. Spicer & Co Ltd, 07977 441189
Studio windows Velux, velux.co.uk



Clockwise from left 'This was a really simple fit out of the space above the garage,' says John. 'The guys basically knocked out a couple of joists to make room for Velux windows, then we opted for a wraparound effect with OSB, which adds real solidity, texture and warmth to our home studio for our business '



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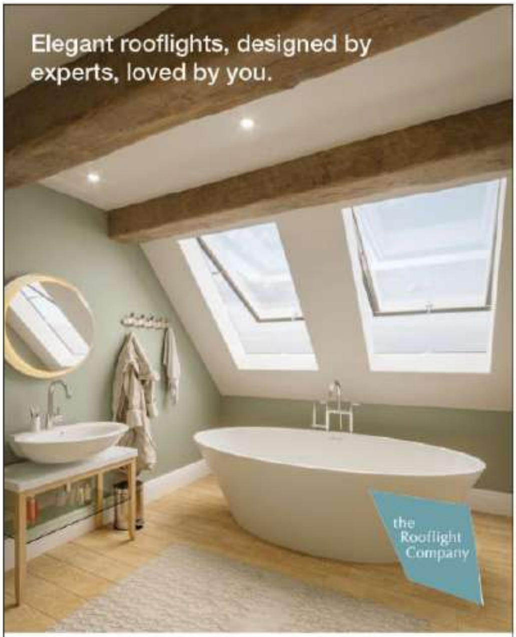

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A home with pets

Do our furry and fluffy friends impact our décor choices? We've spent more time with our pets than ever before, so are we wiser to what makes a pet-friendly home, asks Jennifer Morgan

We know it as one of the great unsolved mysteries of the world: just what exactly did our pets get up to all day while we were out at work? Did Kitty sleep on our favourite knitted throw (you found a few hairs once)? Did Fido really bark at every delivery guy – or was that just a weekend trick? And were the hamsters actually asleep until you turned the key in the lock at 5:30pm? Well, after 18 months of being at home with our pets, we finally know. The pet mystery bubble has burst. And it seems they really do rule the roost when it comes to our style choices and dream homes, too.

Francesca Spada, human mum to three Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, believes that almost every choice she's made in the London home she shares with her husband has been influenced by the 'pups' in some way. Arthur (eight) and Percy (six) were joined by Faye (20 months) just a few weeks before the first lockdown, and have their own Instagram account, @thehouseofcavaliers, detailing their life at home. 'When we were looking to move two years ago, we had a list of things any potential house needed to have: a completely secure back garden, a bathroom with a tub (for washing them or simply their paws), a front garden with a gate and as little carpet as possible,' says Francesca. 'The pups even influenced the interior, with hard-wearing materials, colours that could easily hide their fur, loads of rugs for them to lay on, and beds in every room. They also needed space for their toys and for playing.'

'If I was building our dream home,' says interior stylist Emma Morton-Turner (insidestylists.com), 'then I would definitely have an outdoor shower with a detachable head and warm water. Alan Taylor, our Jackapoo, gets very muddy. He hates a cold hose down – and who could blame him?' Even Emma, who creates gorgeous images for magazines and press, has had to make some style sacrifices for her four-legged friend: 'We started off not having him upstairs, a decision my husband made. But after a week he was in our bedroom – also my husband's decision! Alan howled so much from his bed in the kitchen that we just moved his crate upstairs, but being an interior stylist, there was NO WAY I could live with that in the corner of my bedroom for long, so we trained him to "go to bed" in his squashy bed in our room. I can live with that.'

Another thing that pet owners have come to live with is the fluff. 'It's impossible to keep up with it,' says Francesca. Emma has resorted to throws on every sofa or chair. 'Alan isn't even supposed to moult,' she laughs.

Interior designer Amy Jones (greta-mae.co.uk), herself owner of Griff, a spoodle, says that designing a home for pets is the same as

PHOTOGRAPH **WICKER PET BED, £250, COX & COX**

designing one for kids. 'I always use upholstery fabrics that are a bit more resilient and don't stain quite as easily, while rugs and carpets need to have a shorter pile, so that they're easier to clean. For the walls, go for a wipeable emulsion, and, ideally, a boot room, where there's a sleeping area for pets planned in at an early stage.' Amy does confess to spoiling Griff, though: 'He is allowed on the sofas. We acquired him after we'd finished renovating our house and if he'd come along first, I would have designed a dog-wash area and a built-in bed!'

But it's not just dogs that have us compromising on our homes (or wishing for pet-friendly changes). Meet Milo, the rescue cat belonging to Amy Condon and her family in Perth. After a year of home schooling and being 'stuck inside', the Condon family decided to finally get a cat from a rescue centre. 'Of course, there's plenty of cat hair, but the main change was spending £60 on a microchip cat flap, followed by £190 for a new double-glazed panel for the door for it to go into, only for Milo to remain reluctant to use it. It's currently propped open and Milo stares at us through the door or window to be let in. He's five and rather set in his ways.' Once in, Milo is a bit of a bed hopper too. 'All three of my girls (twins, aged 11, and a nine-year-old) have mid-sleeper beds, and Milo goes through phases of claiming each one. He loves attention and demands lots of tickles.'

> 'WE GOT GRIFF AFTER WE RENOVATED – OTHERWISE I'D HAVE DESIGNED A DOG-WASH AREA AND A BUILT-IN BED!'

Demanding... ah, yes – it seems pets have no idea about working-from-home etiquette either. 'My colleagues and clients got to know the pups very well during the Teams meetings we had,' says Francesca. 'Arthur is now known for snoring a lot and very loudly.' Francesca has recently changed jobs to work at home so she spends as much time as she can with her four-legged pals. 'They love having me at home all of the time.'

Natasha Morabito, rabbit owner and head of communications for Big Fish Little Fish Family Raves, finds having pet bunny Pixie around during the day a lovely distraction. 'It's nice having her around, and if she goes in her little outdoor playpen during the day, then I work outside in the garden, too.' Pixie only joined the family of four last spring at their New Forest home after they lost out on a puppy from a local breeder. 'We decided it would be better to go to a rescue centre and give an older animal a home,' says Natasha. 'The first place I tried had this black-and-brown lop eared rabbit. I'd never had one before, but I've quickly grown to love her. She is mostly an indoor bun, so we have her big hay-lined cage in the living room, which spoils the look just a bit! Normally the cage is open during the day so she can come and go as she pleases. I've had to move my lovely monstera and all other houseplants as she tried to nibble them, and most are poisonous to rabbits. She's also eaten a wicker chair, nibbled cables... and our plans for a new sofa are on hold.'

Of course, like Pixie, there's a generation of pets that have only known life at home with their owners. The so-called 'pandemic pets' also need help adjusting to 'normal'. Battersea's canine behaviour and training manager, Rob Bays, said: 'As many of us spend more time outside our home, whether it be to go into the office, visit friends or head to the pub, it's vital we ensure our pets are also prepared for this big lifestyle change. There's a whole generation of new dogs that don't yet understand that lockdown life isn't the norm. With the right training in place, this potentially overwhelming transition can turn into an exciting time for them as they learn to make new friends and enjoy their own company'

We've seen expanding ranges of 'pet interiors' too, as we attempt to make them feel pampered while working with our existing interiors. John Lewis & Partners and Cox & Cox are among the brands developing their pet categories. 'There's no doubt that our pets are very much part of the family,' says Dani Taylor, buying director at Cox & Cox. 'We're offering stylish and beautiful solutions that you're happy to leave out and even show off.' Pets at Home reported retail revenues up 29.1 per cent year on year, across both food and accessories. Pets are big business.

Back at the ranch, and while living with your pet might not be as stylish, or as mud/fluff/mess-free as you might want, when they look at you big-eyed and waggy-tailed, they do have a habit of making a home complete.

5 WAYS TO GET THE LOOK

Don't compromise on style: pick pet-friendly pieces that blend in with your scheme

1

These food bowls are possibly even nicer than our tableware... Concrete pet bowls, £50, Smith & Goat

2

Let your dog (or cat) sleep like a cosseted log on a stylish pet bed. Monochrome dog bed, from £124, Settle Beds

3

Puss can scale new heights with this curved shelf and step. Kyali set of two cat shelves in walnut and grey, £79, Made

4

Is a pet sofa taking it too far? We think not. Toledo dog sofa in green, £85.99, Wayfair

5

Keep their treats handy in a cute jar worthy of your countertop. Fetch stoneware pet storage jar, £28, Sophie Allport

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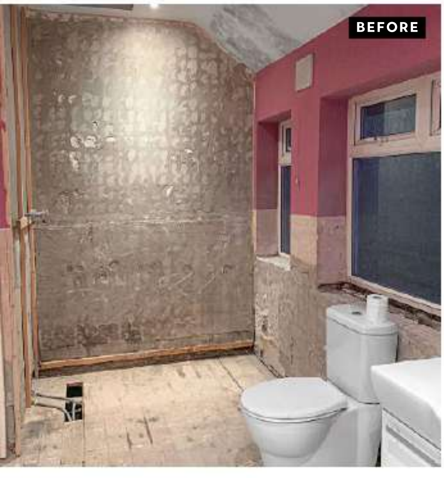
Northern exposure

Bare brick and black fittings have given Heather Russell and Darren Young's bathroom in Sunderland a cool industrial vibe

Heather and Darren Russell swapped a bigger new build for character within their budget when they bought her parents' home in 2019. The familiar bathroom was dated, but Heather hoped it could become a calm retreat while they renovated the rest of the house. Unfortunately, after putting faith in a family friend to revamp it, they had to do it again as there was a gap by the vanity unit, tiles falling off and uneven grouting.

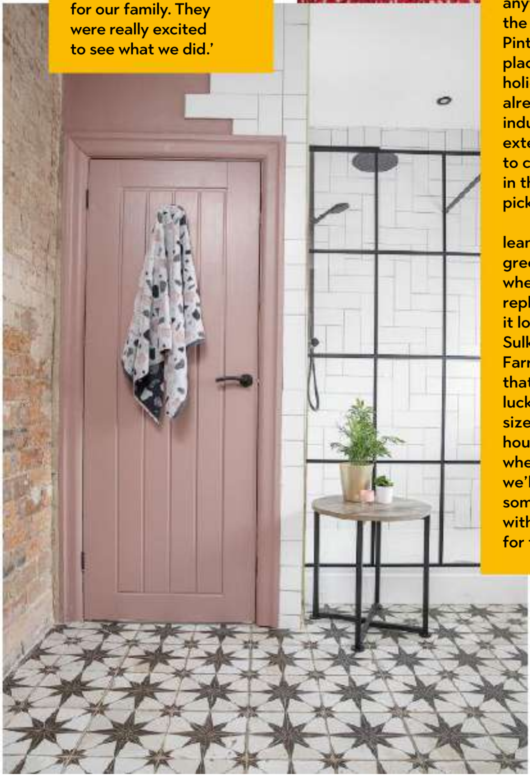
They found Steve and Adrian of Durham Tiling, who came to their rescue. 'They were amazing and carefully got the old tiles off without damaging the fittings,' says Heather.

The generous dimensions of the room allowed the couple to fit in a large bath, walk-in shower and vanity unit that shows off their stunning floor tiles. Heather explains how they overcame challenges to create their dream space.



TIME FOR CHANGE

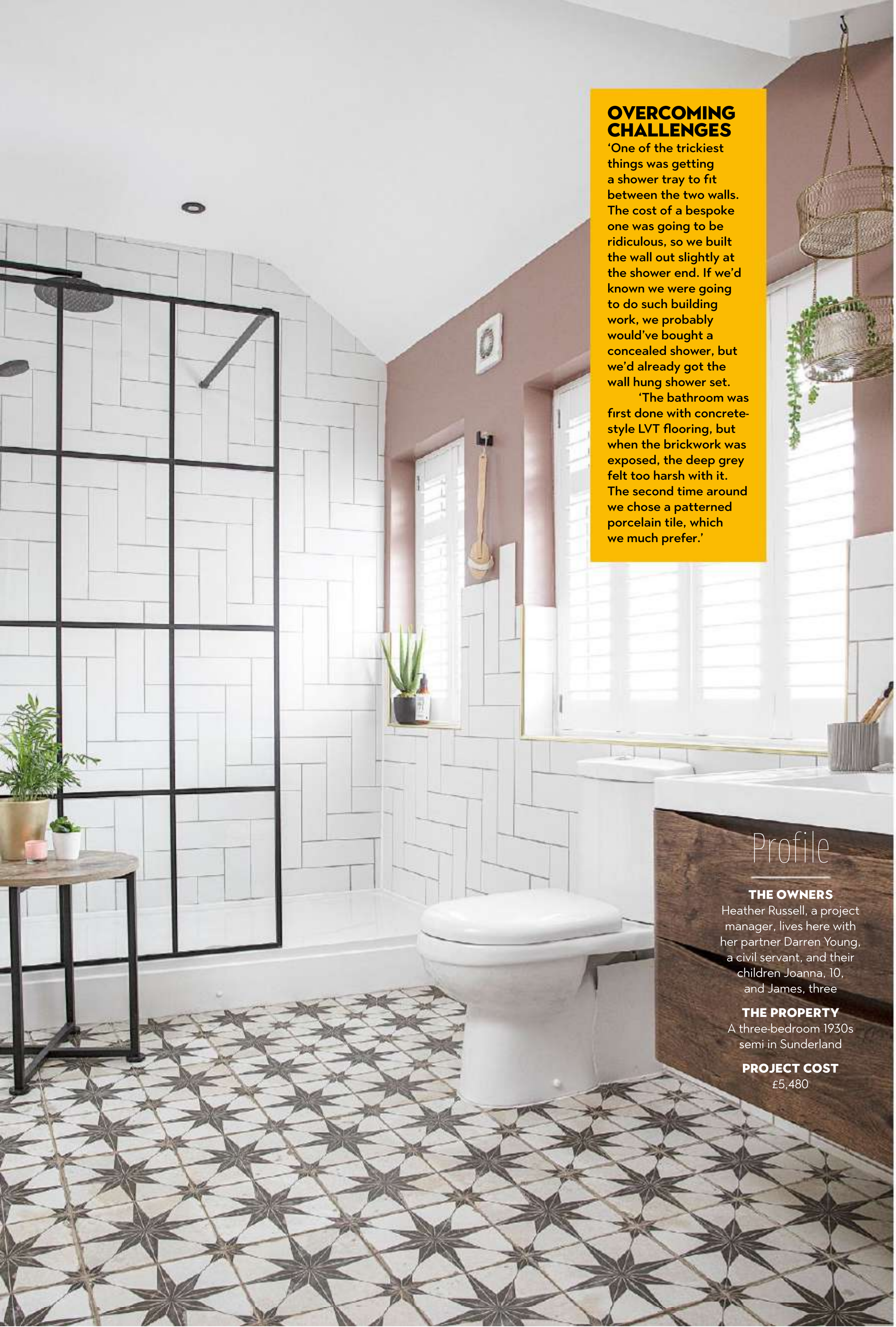
'The old bathroom was a good size at 2.54m by 2.8m. It had large stone-effect beige tiles to half height with fuchsia walls above, chrome fittings and a white gloss vanity unit with a mirrored wall cabinet. As this was where I lived from age 10 to 18, I felt I should chat with my parents and explain that we wanted to make changes so it worked better for our family. They were really excited to see what we did.'



INSPIRATION FROM TRAVELS

'I wanted a hotel-style bathroom rather than anything traditional, so the look was inspired by Pinterest, Instagram and places we've stayed on holiday. Since we were already planning an industrial-style kitchen extension, it made sense to create a similar look in the bathroom, so we picked black fittings.

'Originally I was leaning towards a dark green paint colour, but when we had the walls replastered I loved how it looked, so we went for Sulking Room Pink by Farrow & Ball, which has that plaster look. We're lucky to have a good-sized cupboard that houses the boiler, but when it gets replaced we'll probably create some clever storage with boxes and shelves for towels and toiletries.'



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

'One of the trickiest things was getting a shower tray to fit between the two walls. The cost of a bespoke one was going to be ridiculous, so we built the wall out slightly at the shower end. If we'd known we were going to do such building work, we probably would've bought a concealed shower, but we'd already got the wall hung shower set.

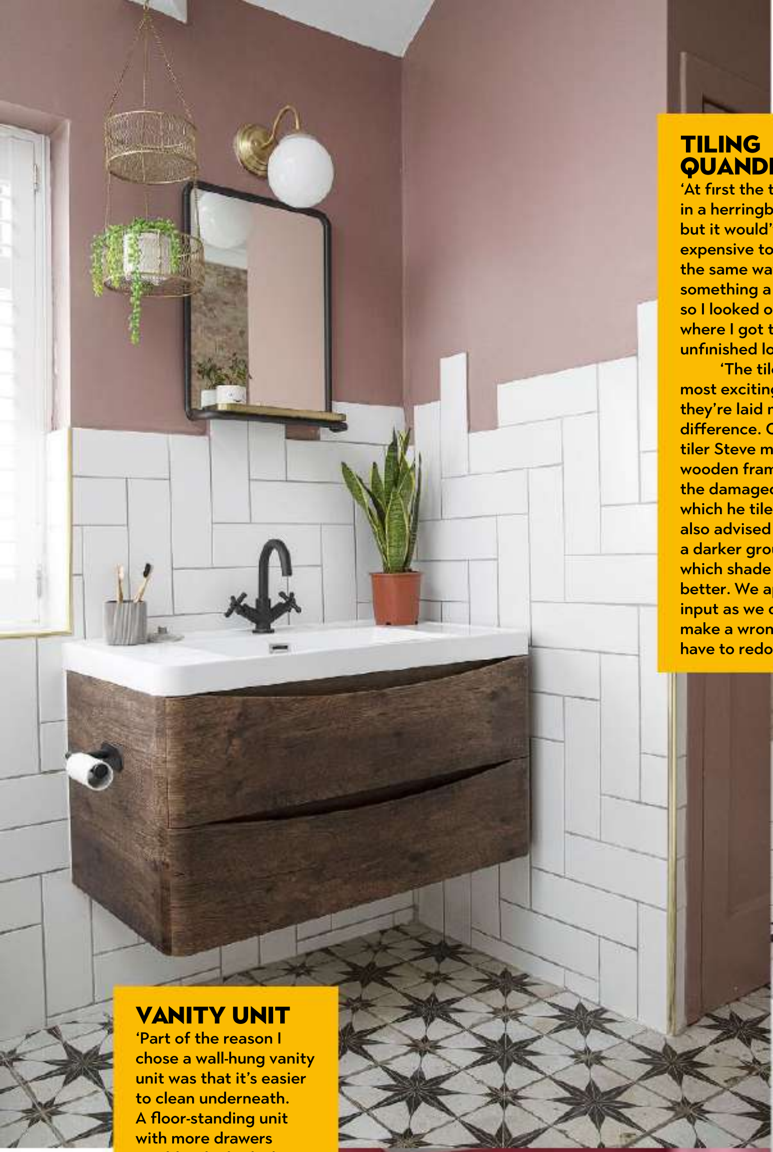
'The bathroom was first done with concrete-style LVT flooring, but when the brickwork was exposed, the deep grey felt too harsh with it. The second time around we chose a patterned porcelain tile, which we much prefer.'

Profile

THE OWNERS
Heather Russell, a project manager, lives here with her partner Darren Young, a civil servant, and their children Joanna, 10, and James, three

THE PROPERTY
A three-bedroom 1930s semi in Sunderland

PROJECT COST
£5,480



TILING QUANDRIES

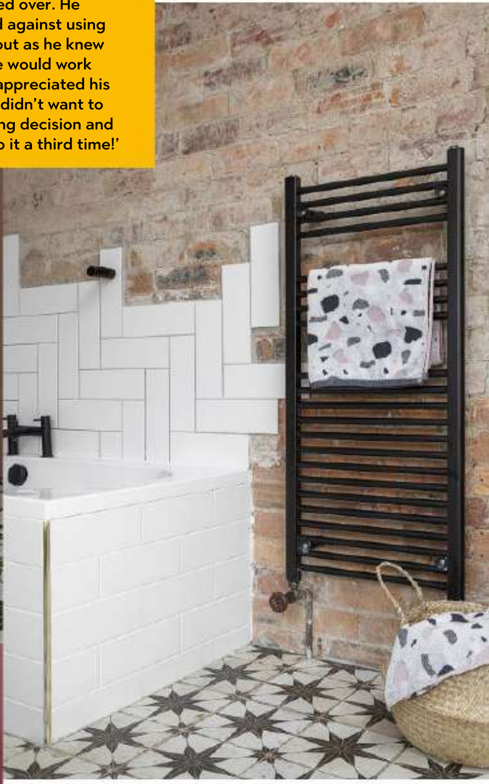
'At first the tiles were laid in a herringbone formation, but it would've been too expensive to re-do them in the same way. I still wanted something a bit different so I looked on Instagram, where I got the idea for the unfinished look with no trim.

'The tiles aren't the most exciting, but the way they're laid makes a big difference. Our brilliant tiler Steve made a new wooden frame to replace the damaged bath panel, which he tiled over. He also advised against using a darker grout as he knew which shade would work better. We appreciated his input as we didn't want to make a wrong decision and have to redo it a third time!'

Costs & contacts

Labour £2,500
Bathroom fittings £1,290
Tiles £790
Shutters £750
Accessories £150

Tiling and bathroom fitting Durham Tiling, 01429 824811, durhamtiling.com
Painting Glendale Decorators, 0191 584 2772



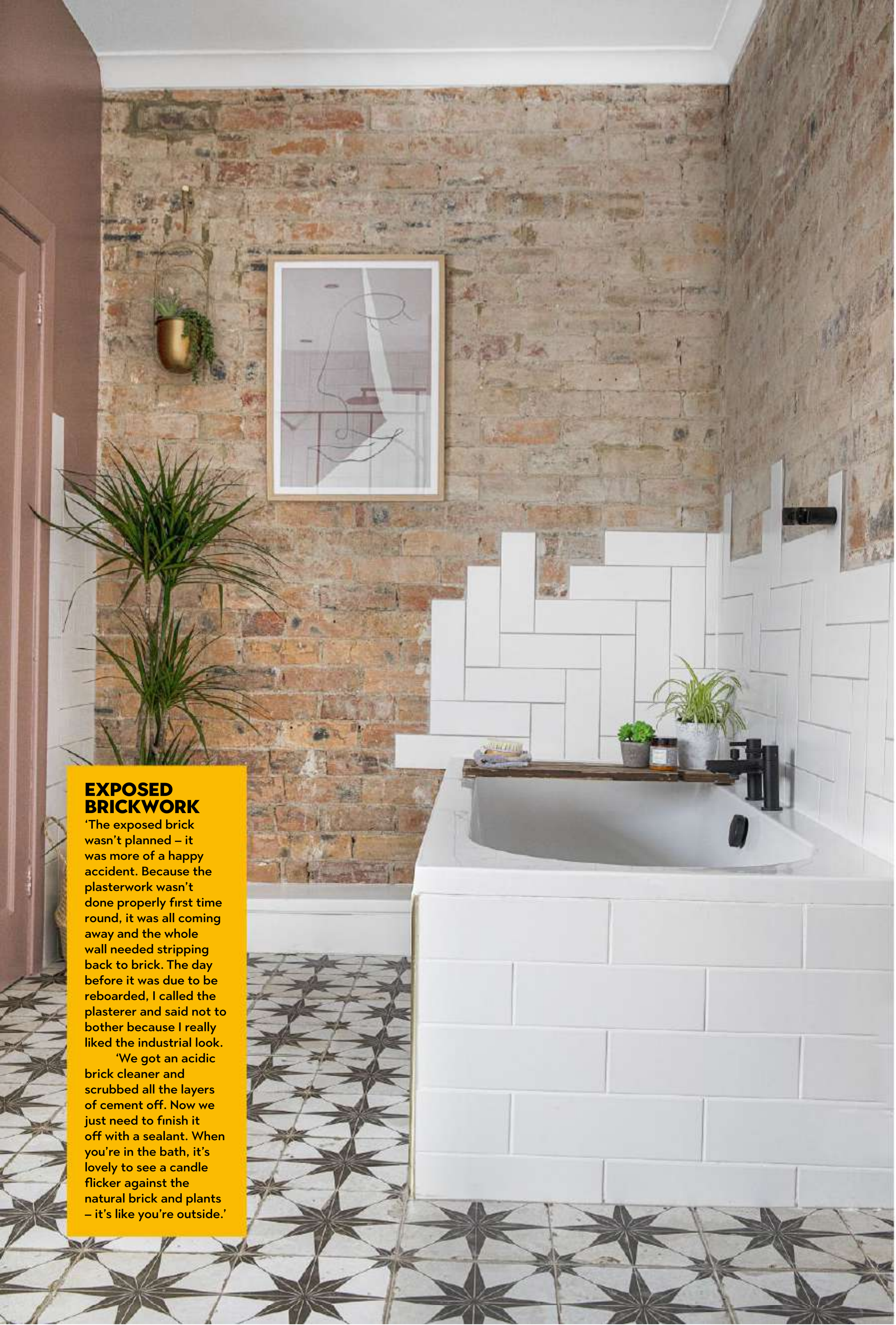
VANITY UNIT

'Part of the reason I chose a wall-hung vanity unit was that it's easier to clean underneath. A floor-standing unit with more drawers would've looked a bit too boxy – this feels less chunky. Also, I love the floor tiles so much that I wanted to see as much of them as possible. When it came to the wall light, I was probably over cautious about making sure it was safe for a bathroom. This Ikea one was really reasonable, it had the right IP rating and the gold echoes the tile trim around the window. An industrial-style mirror with accessories shelf was another must, and this one was a half price bargain at £20.'

BEFORE

SHOPPING LIST
Flooring and ***wall tiles***, Tons of Tiles. ***Shower tray***, Tecaz. ***Toilet*** and ***bath***, Victorian Plumbing. ***Vanity unit*** and ***basin***, Wayfair. Similar ***basin tap***, Mano Mano. ***Radiator***, B&Q. ***Mirror***, Dunelm. ***Hanging planter***, H&M. ***Wall light***, Ikea. ***Art print***, Matalan. ***Bath bridge***, Aldi. ***Towels*** and ***side table***, Asda. ***Shutters***, Hillarys. ***Wall hook***, Homebase. Walls ***painted*** in Sulking Room Pink, Farrow & Ball

WORDS **KAREN WILSON**
PHOTOGRAPHS **KATIE LEE**



EXPOSED BRICKWORK

'The exposed brick wasn't planned – it was more of a happy accident. Because the plasterwork wasn't done properly first time round, it was all coming away and the whole wall needed stripping back to brick. The day before it was due to be reboarded, I called the plasterer and said not to bother because I really liked the industrial look.

'We got an acidic brick cleaner and scrubbed all the layers of cement off. Now we just need to finish it off with a sealant. When you're in the bath, it's lovely to see a candle flicker against the natural brick and plants – it's like you're outside.'

Powdered Clay matt emulsion, £18 for 2.5ltrs, Crown

10 STEPS TO

DECORATING A ROOM

A slap-dash approach to decorating can end in a messy finish. Follow our tips to make sure your project goes smoothly

1

MAP IT OUT

Before you take a scraper or brush to the walls, plan what you want to do in the room. Creating a mood board will give you an idea of what papers and paints you'll need, and the accessories to set them off. It'll prep you for the task ahead; you can decide what you want to do to the walls and the ceiling – whether you'll be papering or painting – and the best order to tackle it in. Try tester pots or peel and stick patches to see how colours and patterns work together and how they react to the light in the room.

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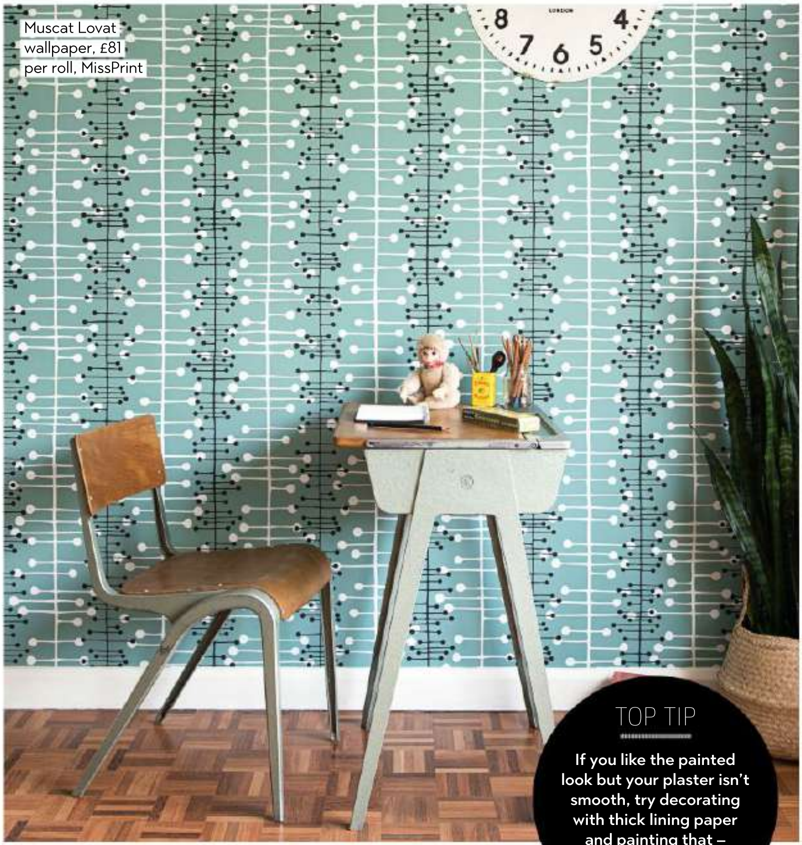
2

Create space

Give yourself room to work. Emptying the space would be ideal but it isn't always possible to relocate bulky items of furniture. Position them in the centre so you can move a ladder freely around them as you go. Cover everything with dust sheets and tuck in tightly as drips or splashes of paint are magnetically drawn to even a sliver of exposed surface. Lay dust sheets on the floor if you're hoping to keep the carpet – you don't want it ruined by open pots of paint or liquid-laden brushes or rollers being kicked or dropped.


Muscat Lovat wallpaper, £81 per roll, MissPrint

3

Prepare for success

Rein in your enthusiasm to start until you have the materials and tools you'll need. Get the basics like a pasteboard, plumb line, proper scrapers, a roller and trays and brushes – preferably free from the caked-on dregs of your last DIY project. You want to avoid having to improvise and strip paper with kitchen utensils. Measure the walls to calculate how many rolls of paper you need to buy. Check the batch numbers on the rolls are the same as different batches might be subtly different in colour. If you're buying paint in 20 litre containers, get a scuttle or kettle to handle more manageable amounts.

TOP TIP

If you like the painted look but your plaster isn't smooth, try decorating with thick lining paper and painting that – just be sure to hide the seams well.

4

Out with the old

Stripping the walls is messy but satisfying. It comes off easier when it's wet, but score the paper lightly first to allow the spray or sponged-on water to soak in. A steamer will speed up the process, but be careful not to oversteam as it can loosen the plaster underneath, particularly in older houses. For stubborn paper, try a liquid stripper – but wear gloves and protective goggles to apply. If cracks or holes are revealed, put filler in, sand when dry, then brush off the dust for a flat surface.

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FEATURE **ALISON JONES**

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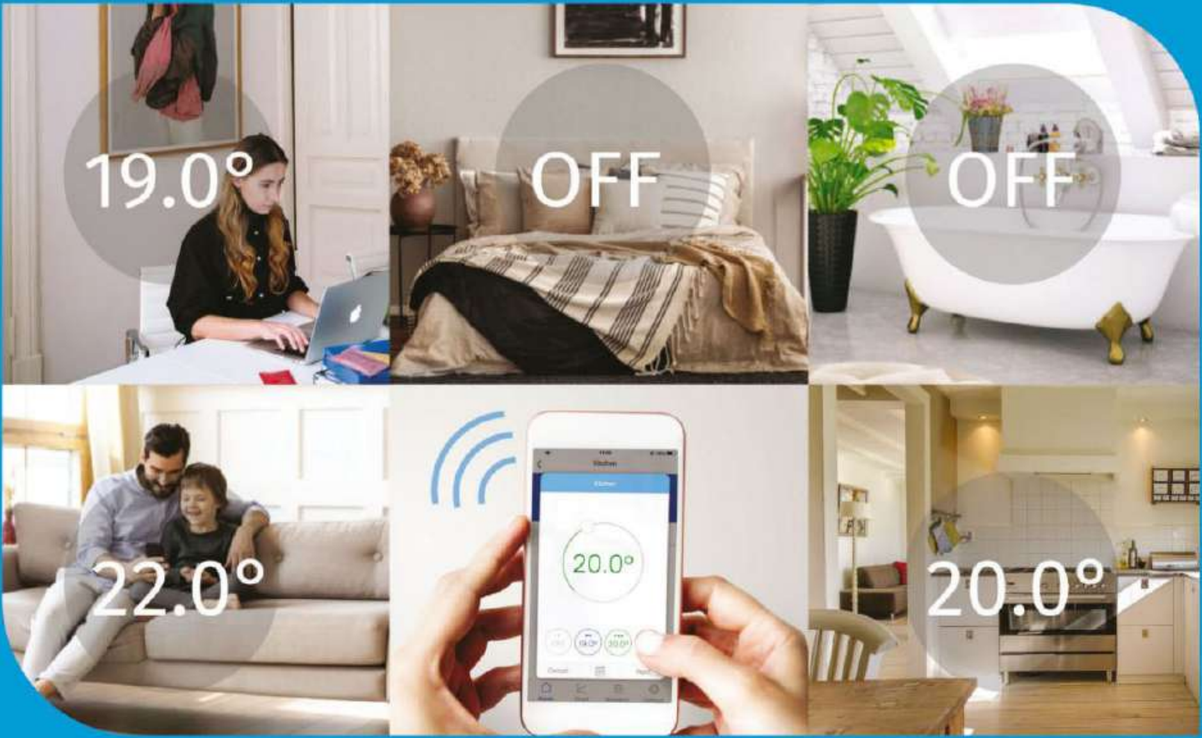

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5

FIRST STEPS

Before any decorating starts, think about your flooring. If you're keeping the carpet, it should be fine so long as it's covered. If you're removing it, now would be a good time to take it up to avoid damaging any freshly painted skirting. If you want to sand the floors, doing it before you paint or decorate will stop your walls getting coated in dust from the sander. It will also give you the chance to fill in any gaps between the skirting and boards. Cover your newly treated boards to protect them from paint splashes.

6

Perfect painting

If you're painting the whole room, begin with the ceiling to prevent getting drips or spray on the walls. Once that's dry, cut in at the edges and sides of the walls using a smaller brush for neat lines, then use a roller or bigger brush to fill in the middle. To avoid smears on light switches, cover with masking tape or simply unscrew them. Two coats of paint should give even coverage

Glasshouse Flora Emerald wallpaper, £65 per roll, Graham & Brown

Alison's top tip

For even coverage when painting, try the W/M technique. Roll out a letter M in paint on the wall followed by a W to fill in the empty area. If you get paint splatters on the window, leave to dry before gently scraping off.

TOP TIP

Take the opportunity to upgrade sockets and switches while walls are bare. Add extra if needed or include charging points.

Roo porcelain light switches, from £79, Swtch

7

Pro papering

If you're wallpapering, consider lining the walls first for the best finish. Lining paper is usually hung horizontally with the wallpaper hung vertically to prevent gaps appearing where the edges meet. Leave a 5mm gap top and bottom so the wallpaper can bond to the walls.

When papering, start in the middle and use a plumb bob and line to mark a straight line as a guide for the first piece. For advice on how to get a professional finish, head to realhomes.com/advice/how-to-wallpaper-a-wall.

8 Smooth skirting

Touch up the skirting and trim last so you don't get any rogue spatter on the woodwork after you've painted it. Sand down the surface to allow the paint to bond then brush off any paint chips or dust. If the boards are dirty, clean with sugar soap or washing up liquid diluted in water. Cover adjacent surfaces and the floor with a low tack tape. On carpet, press the edges of the tape down with a blunt edge tool so the paint doesn't creep underneath. Using a gloss, satin or eggshell paint, cut into the top of the skirting first then brush along the flat part in sections.

Use a small brush, like this one by Ronseal, for more precise work

Duck Egg matt emulsion, £16 for 2.5ltrs, Dunelm

TOP TIP

Removing the radiator means you can access behind it to strip and repaper the wall, rather than scraping or painting only as far down as your hand can reach.

9

Hot new look

If the radiator has been removed for decorating, this might be an opportune moment to smarten it up. Cleaning it regularly and keeping it free of dust and dirt will improve its efficiency. If you're painting a dull radiator, remove the old paint first so that there are as few layers as possible to prevent the warmth getting through.

10

FRESHEN UP THE FLOOR

Flooring is the final touch. If you've kept the carpet, a carpet cleaner could bring the colour to life again. Alternatively you could lay new. If you prefer the look of wood but the floorboards aren't in good condition, look at engineered wood flooring or LVT. To stop rugs creasing or creeping, put anti-slip mats underneath.

ECO CHOICE

Get the right tools with a greener edge. This roller, brush and tray are made from bamboo and sugar cane. From £20 for a regular kit, Coat Paints

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLIES
there's no planet B

ADVERTORIAL

Makeover your metalwork with a new brush range

Harris' specially designed brushes will leave painted metal looking smooth and glossy

Brighten up your radiators, gates and garage doors with a new brush range designed specifically for use with metalwork paints.

Extending Harris' Seriously Good collection, the brushes deliver great results while reducing the effort needed to achieve a perfect finish.

The Harris Seriously Good Metalwork Brushes are available in 15mm round, 50mm/2" flat and 75mm/3" flat – ideal for everything from large expanses of flat surfaces to more detailed precision work. Like the rest of the Seriously Good collection, the brushes are colour-coded by task, making it easy to select the best product for each project.

The metalwork brush also benefits from Harris' patented NO-LOSS technology, guaranteeing no bristle loss for a smooth, streak-free finish.

Preparation is vital to ensure the best results when painting. Lay a dust sheet down to protect other surfaces or cover edges with masking tape before lightly sanding the metal down.

Most metal surfaces will benefit from an undercoat (primer), especially if applying a paint in a bright colour.

As with all Seriously Good paint brushes, to protect the NO-LOSS technology it's important to clean and dry them according to the paint manufacturer's instructions after use.

Harris Seriously Good Metalwork Brushes are available through DIY stores, or find stockists at **harrisbrushes.com/stockists/** For more information about Harris decorating tools, protection, preparation and cleaning products, plus hints and tips on all key decorating projects, visit **harrisbrushes.com.**

Clockwise from above The metal brushes come in different sizes to suit detailed work or wider surfaces

Harris

SECOND NATURE
KITCHENS
If you can dream it,
we can design it

When it comes to kitchens it's second nature for us to give you a truly personal service, expert craftsmanship, and beautiful design, all at an affordable price.

To find your nearest retailer, visit: www.sncollection.co.uk/showrooms

PROJECT of the month

MODERNISING A PERIOD HOME

Embrace characterful, original features while making changes to fit with modern family life with our helpful guide to working with period properties

Period homes are much sought after for their characterful features, quirky design layouts and endless possibilities. Whether you fantasize about beautiful big sash windows or original wooden flooring, chances are there's something you love about homes with a history. Often they're ripe for extension, and work with a variety of interior finishes, from Scandi minimalism to bold and bright schemes.

However, they can also throw up challenges you can never quite foresee. You can mitigate against some of these by having an expert in heritage buildings carry a thorough inspection of the property before the purchase, so that you have an idea of the types of issues that you might face. It's also worth building in a healthy contingency budget.

Updating a period property to meet modern standards of comfort doesn't mean doing away with original features such as moulding, existing fireplaces and single-glazed sash or stained glass windows. In fact, many heritage companies can help you refurbish these, restoring them to their former glory while increasing the thermal efficiency of the building.

Read on to find out how one homeowner updated their period property while maintaining features that top the wish lists of many UK homebuyers – and check out our tips for taking on your own period renovation.

TURN OVER TO SEE HOW A YOUNG FAMILY HAVE MIXED AUTHENTIC FEATURES AND CONTEMPORARY STYLE ▷▷▷▷▷▷▷▷

WORDS **IFEOLUWA ADEDEJI** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANNA STATHAKI/INTERIORS BORN & BRED STUDIO**

FOR MORE ADVICE AND IDEAS, GO TO REALHOMES.COM/RENOVATIONS #SOREALHOMES

GLOSSARY

PLANNING PERMISSION

A request made to the local council to carry out building works on your property or garden

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

Works that can be undertaken on a property or garden without needing to request planning permission

TENDER

A process where you invite contractors to present you with their quotes for the works that you would like completed

BUILDING REGULATIONS

A set of standards that should be adhered to when renovating or building a new property

LISTED CONSENT

Permission to make changes to a property that's listed in order to ensure they're sympathetic to the building's character

CONSERVATION AREA

An area of special historical or architectural importance

TOP TIP

SYMPATHETIC MATERIALS
Spruce up the exterior of the property with matching materials. Stonework can be repaired and repointed using lime, for instance. Extending? Consider whether matching brickwork could help create the illusion of something that's always been there. Glazing that's sympathetic to the period of the property can add wow factor: options like Crittall doors are popular among renovators today.

Modern period

Kate and David moved to Muswell Hill from South London, which initially felt like quite an unusual move, but with both their families located up north they wanted to be closer, especially as they have children and also run a small business (smallandwild.com)

'We loved the area, the local schools and our road in particular, so we had been looking and speaking to estate agents for some time,' says Kate. 'We initially dismissed the property as it had been recently renovated and we wanted somewhere we could do work to ourselves. After missing out on a few "doer-uppers", though, we revisited it and realised that it had so many great features – and actually, with a young family, somewhere "done" had a lot of benefits. The house really appealed because it's light with beautiful big windows. The original stained glass door was one of our favourite features of all. We also knew it was a house that we could really grow into with a good garden for the kids.

'The previous owners were much more sophisticated than we felt we were so it was a case of adding our own character and making it into a really liveable space. We also took out a large ornate (not original) fireplace from the family room and put a modern gas stove in its place. We painted each room a different shade as it was all magnolia – we did take this a bit too far, though, and it's something we've now pared back on.

'We struggled a bit with getting the living space to work for us, which is why we turned to Lisa at Born & Bred Studio. She helped us find a layout that works perfectly, giving the kids space to play while also providing a stylish social backdrop.

'Our third baby was born earlier this year, so Lisa also helped us turn our loft room into a bedroom/den for our two older boys, which they absolutely love. I'd advise people to take their time and get to know the house itself if possible before doing anything drastic! And although adding colour through paint can be fantastic, we found that, for us, we could actually appreciate the period features more by keeping busy living areas simply decorated and adding colour through furniture, pictures and accessories.'

TOP TIP

SCAVENGE & SALVAGE

It's often the finishing touches that make the world of difference. Modern radiators and light switches will look out of place in a heritage home, while a visit to salvage yards and antique markets might surprise you – you could find the perfect fittings for your interiors, and save money at the same time.

Before you start

Q DO I NEED TO CONSULT AN EXPERT?

A An architect can help you create a sympathetic design that works for you. If they're familiar with the local planning rules, they can help you navigate the bureaucracy and gain permission. A local conservation officer will also be able to help.

Q DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

A If your property is listed or in a Conservation Area, you will have to seek permission from the local planning department.

MAD ABOUT THE HOUSE
BRITISH DESIGNERS AT HOME
Aesop.

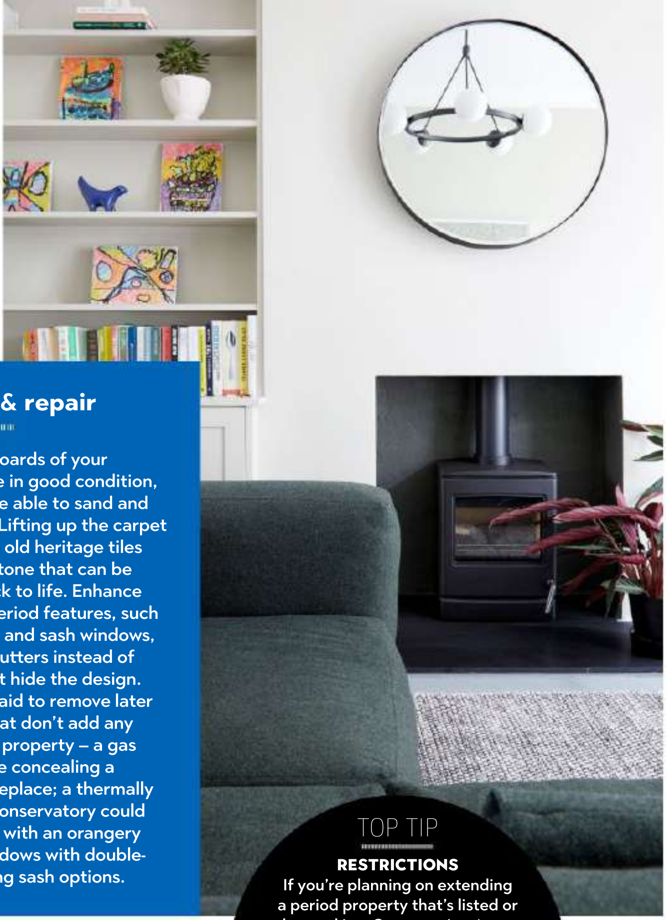
TOP TIP

INSULATE IT

The materials used to build older properties usually absorb and evaporate moisture, while modern ones have barriers that stop it from entering. This means that you need to check the most appropriate materials for insulation – such as sheep's wool, which absorbs moisture – while making sure you have enough ventilation. Period properties tend to be solid wall construction, rather than cavity wall, so can't be insulated. External wall insulation can be an effective option, if you have permission to install it.

Costs & contacts

Project cost £80,000
Architect/designer Born & Bred Studio, 0773 2605003, bornandbredstudio.com
Construction time 10 months



Restore & repair

If the floorboards of your property are in good condition, you might be able to sand and stain them. Lifting up the carpet could reveal old heritage tiles or original stone that can be brought back to life. Enhance attractive period features, such as large bay and sash windows, by fitting shutters instead of curtains that hide the design. Don't be afraid to remove later additions that don't add any value to the property – a gas fire might be concealing a Victorian fireplace; a thermally inefficient conservatory could be replaced with an orangery or uPVC windows with double-glazed sliding sash options.

REAL HOMES .COM

See our
full guide to
renovating here

TOP TIP

RESTRICTIONS

If you're planning on extending a period property that's listed or located in a Conservation Area, speak to the planning department of your local council first. Take a look around the area to see what has already been allowed by the authorities. If you're engaging an architect, work with someone local to the area who is familiar with how things work.

Layout matters

While period properties ooze charm, they can also be problematic when it comes to getting the layout right for modern living. Common issues include small, dark rooms that don't flow well. If you don't want to extend, it's still possible to create larger open-plan spaces by removing walls – and you'd be surprised by what you can achieve by opening up or even closing up doorways. Going into the loft space could also be an option to explore. It's worth living in the property for a while and getting to know the space before you make drastic changes you could regret later on. This may give you the opportunity to understand the pros and cons of extending and see whether you could get the home you want by making smaller alterations.

#SOREALHOMES

PROJECT NEWS

The latest ideas, trends and essential buys for your kitchen, bathroom and renovation

Silio 1 light ceiling light in matt black or brushed brass, £69, Light&Lamps

ELEGANT ILLUMINATION

Bathroom lighting may need a higher IP rating and more protection from moisture, but that doesn't mean you need to switch off on style. The first Light&Lamps collection for the bathroom is decorative and practical. The Coro, with its three multidirectional opal bulbs, can act as ambient or task lighting, while the low-hanging Silio pendants add drama by framing a mirror.

The heat is on

Give your living or dining room a glow up ready for winter with a new focal-point fire. Arada Stoves' Ellere electric fire has a contemporary vibe with its cassette-style design that sits back in the wall or chimney breast. It has 144 setting variations so you can decide on everything from the flame height and brightness to the colour. Remote control means easy operation.

Ellere electric fire, starts from £1,099, Arada Stoves

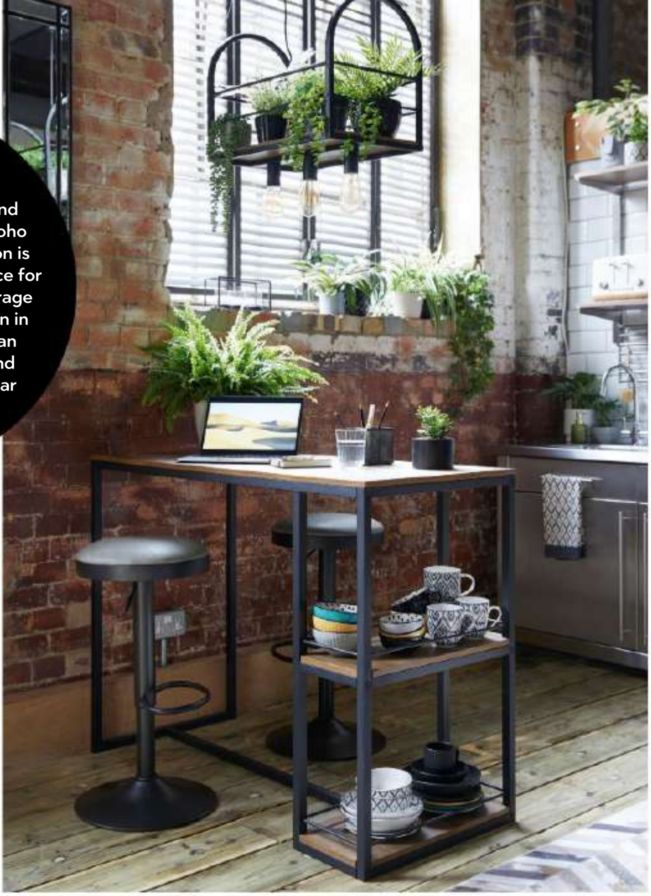
Lead the charge

The future of cars is electric, and 'fuelling' them via our home supply. Fischer Future Heat's new Fischer EV is app-controlled and can charge your car at the cheapest times to keep bills down. It'll also switch to low power mode if you're using other appliances. The Fischer EV is POA.

Living the dream

Small-space kitchens can often mean an end to range cooker aspirations, but Rangemaster has come to the rescue with a range that will fit in a 60cm space. The freestanding cooker comes in four fuel types, including induction, dual-fuel, ceramic and all-gas, all with a top oven and main oven. The new induction has a four-zone hob which can be individually programmed to switch off automatically and avoid overcooking. The cookers start from £879 to £899.

FEATURE **ALISON JONES**

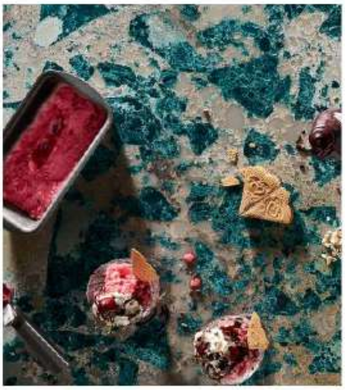


Called to the bar

We're loving the versatility and industrial vibes of Dunelm's Boho range in the kitchen. The Fulton is a handy breakfast bar with space for bar stools and handy shelf storage at the side. A practical solution in even a compact room, you can move it where you need it and easily zone a space. Fulton bar table, £149; Terni bar stool in grey, £39, Dunelm

Affordable style

A classy look doesn't always need to come at a high price. The new Delta collection from Whiteville Ceramics has a high quality feel with its curves and sleek edges, but it's reassuringly affordable – a Delta washbasin costs from £60. The pieces are made using high-pressure casting technology, resulting in a smooth surface and durable finish that's also easy to clean.

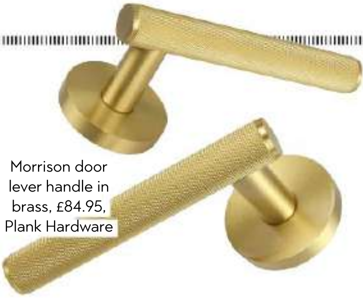


LAVISH LOOK

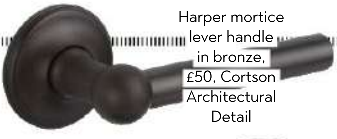
The myth of El Dorado has long been linked with an abundance of gold and precious stones, so it's an apt name for this jewel-like surface from Königstone. Teal segments stand out against the cream and grey background in the quartz worktop. Paired with neutral-coloured units, the Eldorado would make a dazzling focal point on an island. It's also robust, resistant to scratches, stains and heat. From £700 per m^2 for 20mm thickness

Handle this

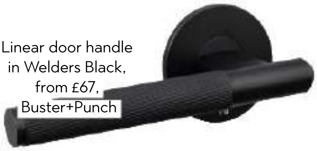
Accessorise your doors with metallic handles in a finish to suit your scheme and with a reassuringly firm grip.



Morrison door lever handle in brass, £84.95, Plank Hardware



Harper mortice lever handle in bronze, £50, Cortson Architectural Detail



Linear door handle in Welders Black, from £67, Buster+Punch

Cosy comfort

As dark mornings and evenings approach, bed becomes a more attractive place to linger. So if bedrooms are to become our oasis, up the style stakes with flooring that looks good and is a pleasure to put your slipperless feet on. Amtico's luxury vinyl tile has the character of parquet or floorboards and a comfortable feel. It also works with underfloor heating for warmth from the toes up.

Spacia Drift Pine, from £44.99 per m^2, Amtico

Monochrome mix

If you're getting your cook on ahead of the season of sweet festive treats, the limited edition Light & Shadow stand mixer from KitchenAid is the baking business. With chic contrasting colourways, the black ceramic studded bowl offers a tactile experience, while the warm white mixer has 10 speed settings. The Artisan Light & Shadow stand mixer is £425.48 at Crate & Barrel

EauZone Mesh shower screens, from £3,481.20, Matki

PRECIOUS METAL

Combine subtle concealment with the glamour of gold in an opulent mesh shower screen. This is a bathroom investment piece with a gold (or silver) mesh between layers of reflective safety glass giving off glints of light. Part of the EauZone range, the panels are edged with brass in a variety of finishes to enhance or contrast with the sparkling centre.

STAY SAFE IN WINTER

Kane Oughton, product manager for Hive (hivehome.com), shares his top security tips

SMART LIGHTS

Smart lights are a great way to get started. They can be scheduled to switch on and off even when you're not there, making it look like someone's home when the house is empty. You can also link them to motion sensors, so that they come on when movement is detected.

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR CAMERAS

For serious surveillance, motion-activated smart cameras, complete with night vision, start recording as soon as they detect people, movement or sound. They can send notifications straight away, too, prompting you to check the live stream immediately and take action if needed.

WINDOW AND DOOR SENSORS

If you're always worrying that you've not locked up properly after leaving the house, then window and door sensors linked to a smart phone or tablet are your saviour. You can check everything is shut with a quick tap on the app, and you'll get a notification if anything opens unexpectedly.

SECURITY LIGHTS AND SIRENS

Bright lights and alarms are a great deterrent for intruders. Something like the Hive Siren has a built-in security light and is as loud as a police car. You can connect it to sensors and cameras so the siren gets triggered when activity is detected – and you can turn it off with a keypad or a quick tap of the Hive app.

A SMART ALARM SYSTEM

A smart alarm system – like Hive HomeShield – lets you protect your home from your phone. You simply connect all your security devices though an app, and you'll get smart security reports and intelligent alerts for you and your trusted contacts.

ADVERTORIAL

Smart security at home or away

Hive's HomeShield is high-tech help to protect your house, no matter where you are

Over the last year and a half, we've all spent more time in our homes than ever before, and our relationship with them has changed beyond recognition. Those familiar four walls adapted to contain offices, classrooms, workout studios, entertainment venues and so much more.

As a result, people have spent hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds on renovations and improvements, ensuring our homes became the safe havens we needed them to be. Now that dynamic is changing once again as we adjust to a sense of normality. For some that has meant rushing away on holiday and for others, it's meant welcoming loved ones back into their houses.

We've all become more attached to our homes, and what's in them, than ever before – and Hive HomeShield can play a key role in protecting them. HomeShield takes individual home security devices and adds an intelligent ecosystem so that customers can interact with them via an app.

With HomeShield, you can easily check that your home is safe and protected, whether you've just popped out, are back working in the office or have escaped on a longed-for break.

It has three modes – Home, Sleep and Away – with the alarms activated according to the different settings. For example, in sleep mode the windows and downstairs might be armed. When triggered, HomeShield will alert the homeowners and trusted contacts via app notifications, SMS and phone calls. Total control from anywhere means that alarms can be armed or disarmed remotely.

The system offers Live View to check on the home in real time or go back to view events the camera might have captured, as recordings are safely stored for up to 30 days. Another useful feature is that the camera can act as a siren to deter intruders.

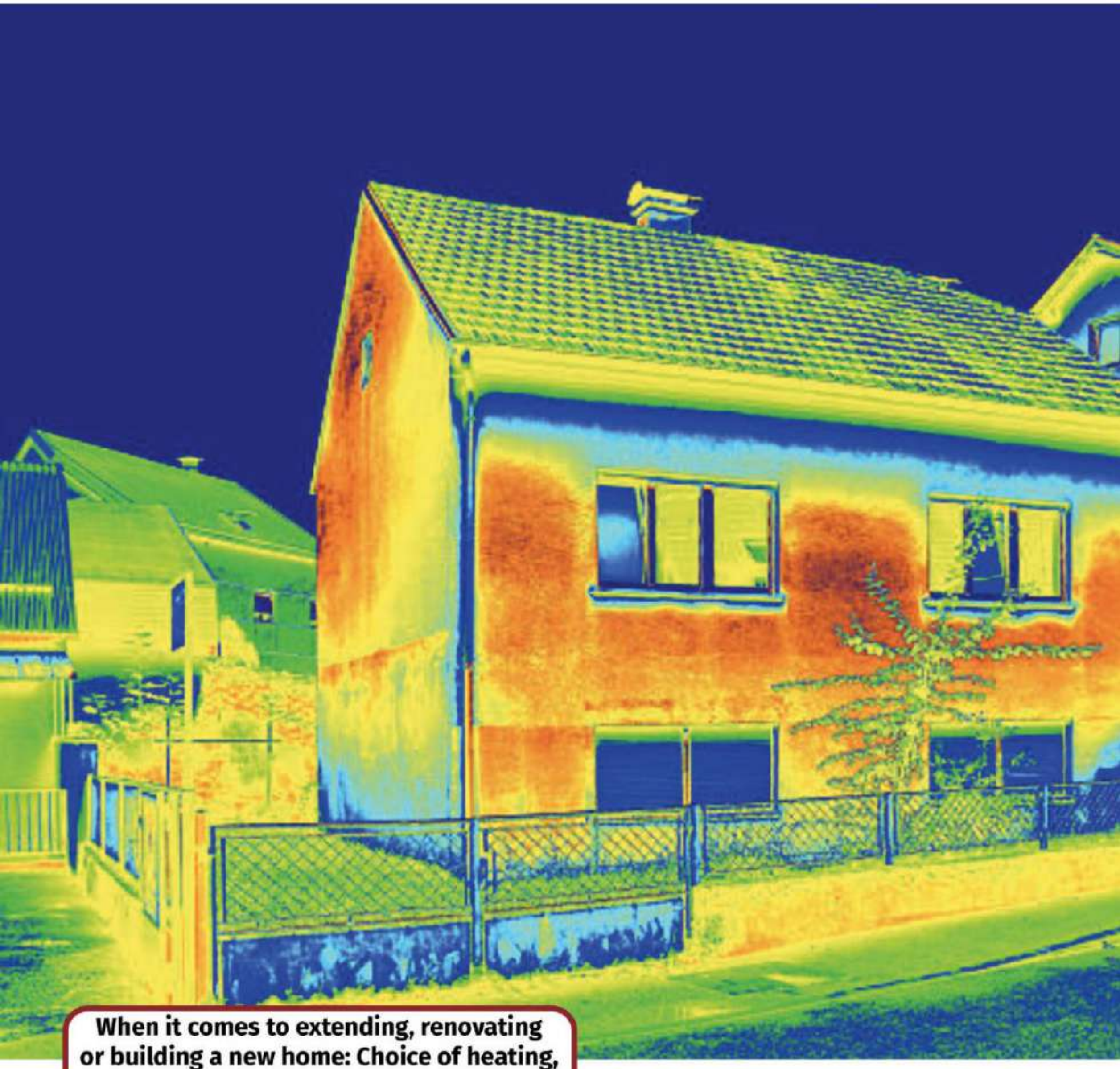
HomeShield also delivers smart security reports, intelligent alerts and unique log in details.

Subscribing to HomeShield costs £9.99. For more details on linking up your devices with a smart alarm system, go to **hivehome.com/smart-home-security/hive-homeshield**

HIVE

Smarter homes from British Gas

“Houses Pose More Dange

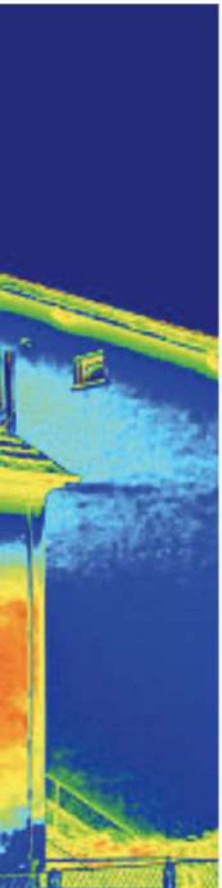


When it comes to extending, renovating or building a new home: Choice of heating, will probably prove to be the most important decision ever made.

Wundatherm is tried & tested

Wunda have already supplied over 2 million Wundatherm boards to happy customers - that's enough to cover 50,000 extensions. Wundatherm is recommended through word of mouth by tradesmen & satisfied customers because it really works.

r to Climate than Vehicles”



Excerpts from Melissa York’s “The Times” article - Wednesday 25/08/21

There are 25 million homes producing 58.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, according to analysis from the National Housing Federation. Compare this to the Department for Transport figures that state 27 million cars were emitting 56 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. This means that the average household in England produces more carbon dioxide every year in their home than they do by driving. With our homes consuming 35% of energy in the UK and emitting 20 per cent of our carbon dioxide emissions, its clear net-zero emissions will be possible only alongside a long term plan to make our homes greener.

Heating homes uses 42% of your utility bill - According to YouGov

100 years of central heating leaves the UK with a legacy of Boilers, Furnaces and Radiators using high temperature water in around 85% of homes. Radiators use high temperature water at 70 - 80°C - which is impossible to reproduce with green methods such as air and ground source heat pumps.

Wundatherm Rapid Response® Underfloor Heating is On Demand heating that’s future proof and is ready for net-zero now

Replacing Radiators with Wundatherm will immediately reduce energy consumption because the working temperature of 35 - 45°C is significantly lower. Wundatherm’s heat bearing pipes are laid directly beneath the surface of the floor and not buried 5-6 inches beneath the screed.

Wundatherm offers ‘Heat On Demand’ in every room working perfectly and producing net -zero emissions. It will also work with existing boilers until you’re ready to swap over to a greener future.

More Product Details online:
www.wundagroup.com

Check our 5* Reviews on Trustpilot

Trustpilot

★★★★★

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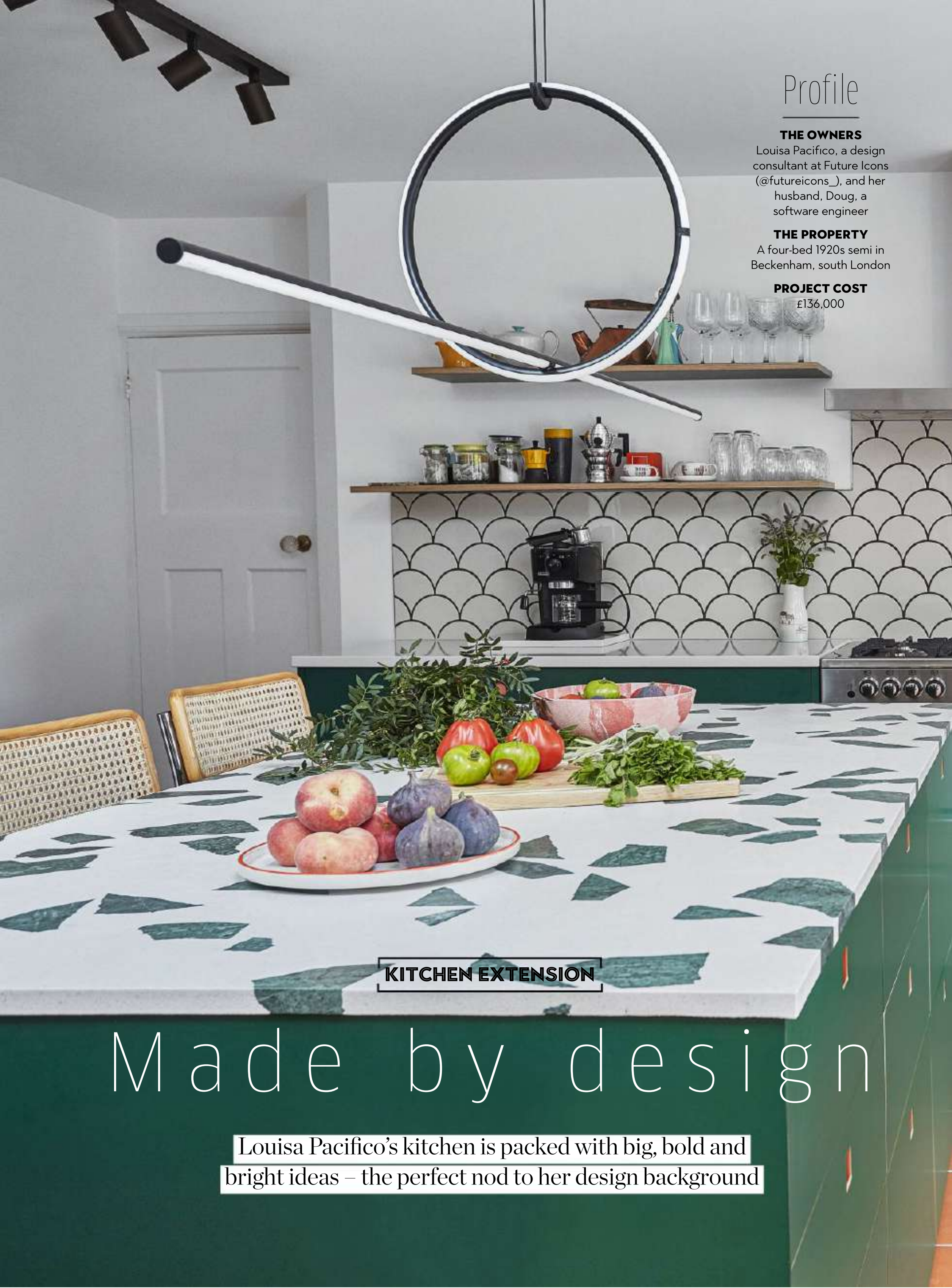


Profile

THE OWNERS
Louisa Pacifico, a design consultant at Future Icons (@futureicons_), and her husband, Doug, a software engineer

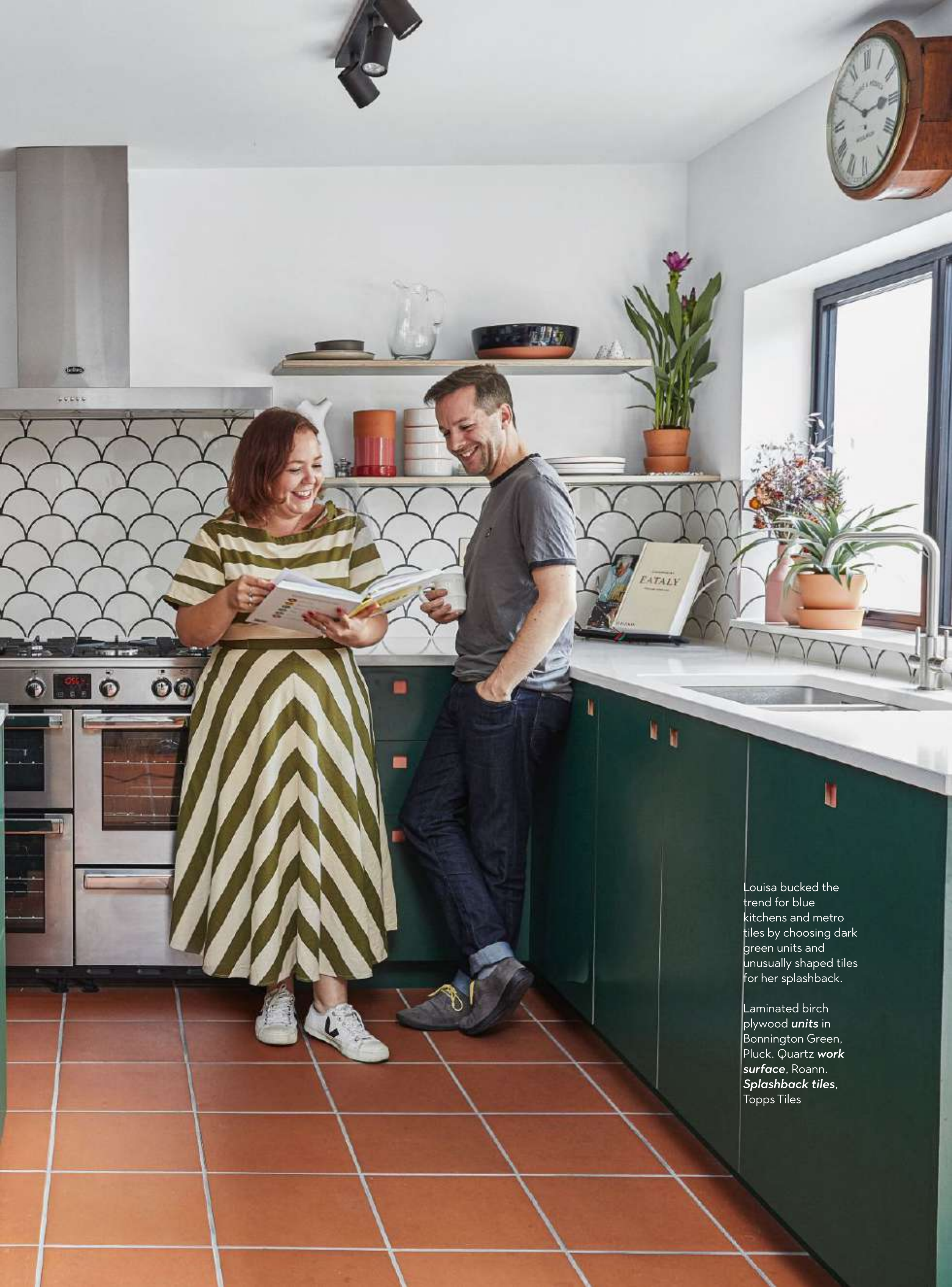
THE PROPERTY
A four-bed 1920s semi in Beckenham, south London

PROJECT COST
£136,000

KITCHEN EXTENSION

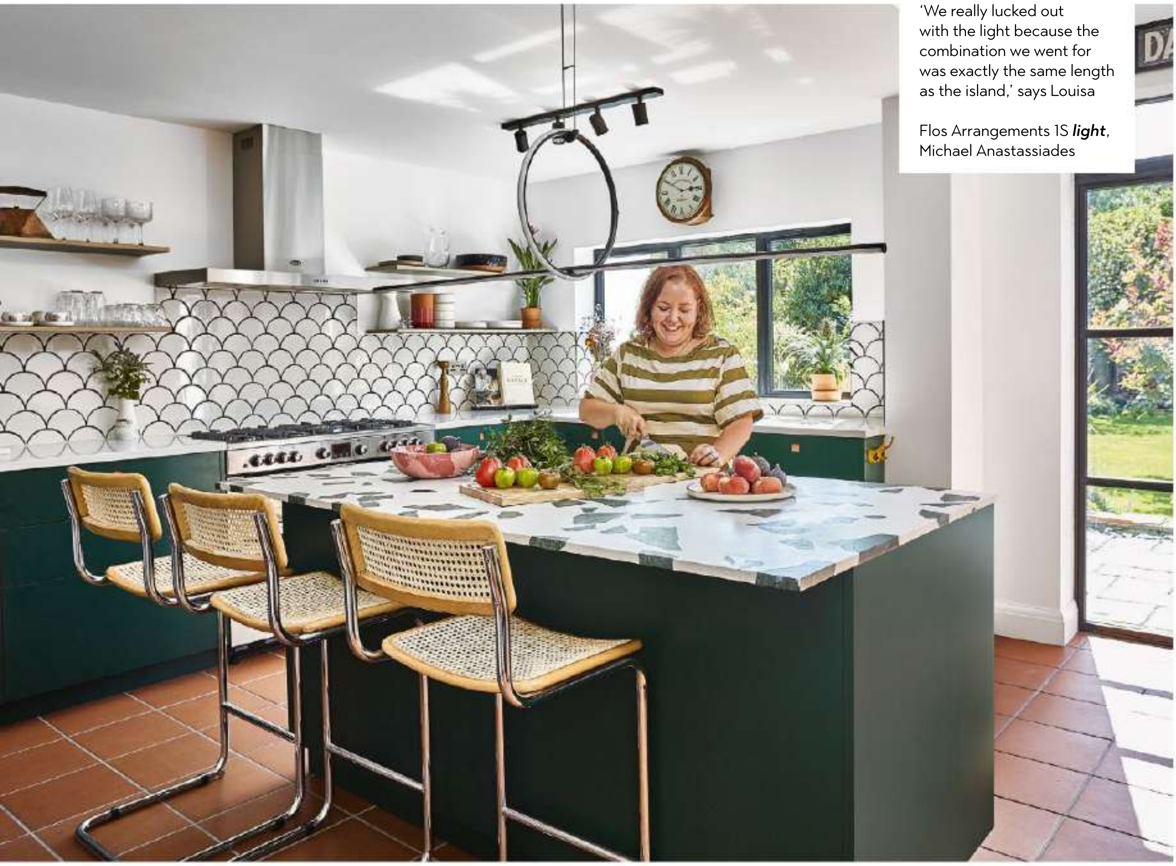
Made by design

Louisa Pacifico's kitchen is packed with big, bold and bright ideas – the perfect nod to her design background



Louisa bucked the trend for blue kitchens and metro tiles by choosing dark green units and unusually shaped tiles for her splashback.

Laminated birch plywood ***units*** in Bonnington Green, Pluck. Quartz ***work surface***, Roann. ***Splashback tiles***, Topps Tiles



'We really lucked out with the light because the combination we went for was exactly the same length as the island,' says Louisa

Flos Arrangements 1S ***light***, Michael Anastassiades

The way you design your home can reveal a lot about you – whether you're cool, calm and minimalistic, cleverly creative, or practically minded (hello, pet owners and parents with young children). Louisa Pacifico's kitchen is bold, colourful and completely unique – a reflection of her design background, but also of her strong creative vision and thoughtful ethos. We hear how she realised her vision for the space; from the terrazzo worktops – a collaboration between herself, the kitchen company and a former client – to the sculptural pendant light over the island and one-of-a-kind artwork on the walls.

BEFORE

STEP ONE 1

GOOD BONES

'We bought in this area back in 2016 because as a south Londoner, it was important to be close to family,' says Louisa. 'Due to house prices, we had to go for a project. The bones of the place were good, but it hadn't been loved for over a decade. The galley kitchen was an orange-brown colour, with wooden tops that had burn marks from hot pans. The wall cupboards made the space feel dark and enclosed.

'After using the house for two years, we realised we wanted a separate room to close the mess off after a dinner party, so decided not to open up the whole of the back of the house. We instead wanted separate spaces that were more functional and enjoyable.'

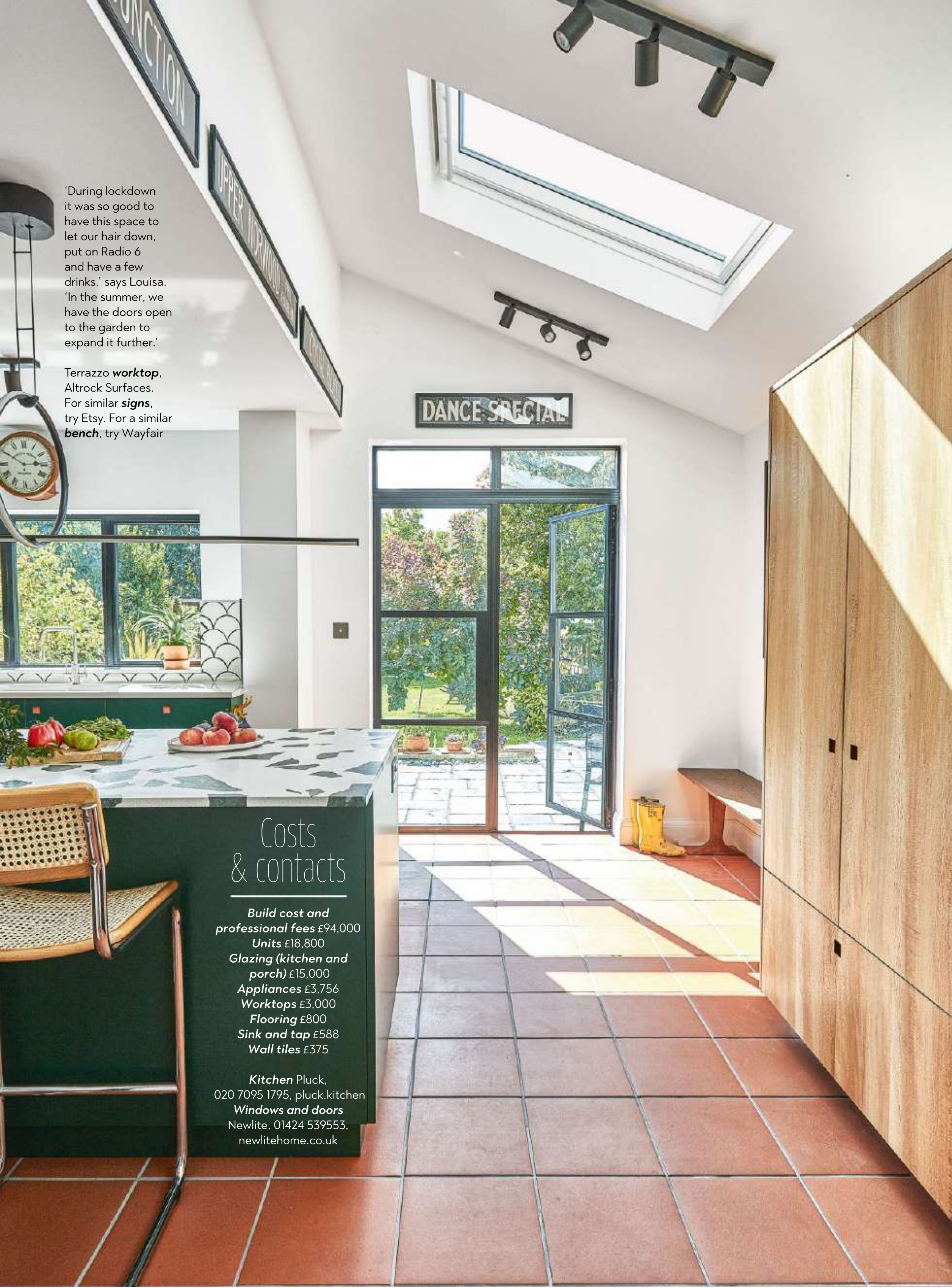
STEP TWO 2

TEAM EFFORT

'This is our forever home and we're very much of the mindset of "buy once, buy well". I've worked in the design industry for over 16 years and seen fashions come and go – it's made me want to aim for something that's contemporary, but that also lasts. We've renovated with late 1920s style in mind, rather than trying to change and remould it.

'Doug and I sketched out what we felt was right for the house first, and we worked with a technical drawing person and a structural engineer. We were creating a rectangular room from a galley kitchen, which felt relatively simple, so we gave it a go and did some of the work ourselves, saving us at least £5,000.'

WORDS **ELLEN FINCH** PHOTOGRAPHS **MALCOLM MENZIES**



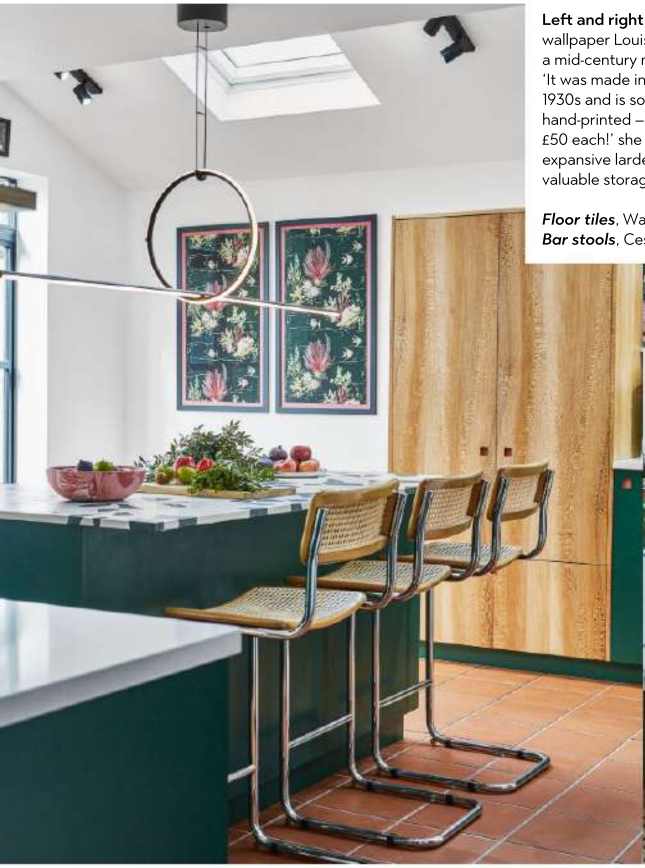
'During lockdown it was so good to have this space to let our hair down, put on Radio 6 and have a few drinks,' says Louisa. 'In the summer, we have the doors open to the garden to expand it further.'

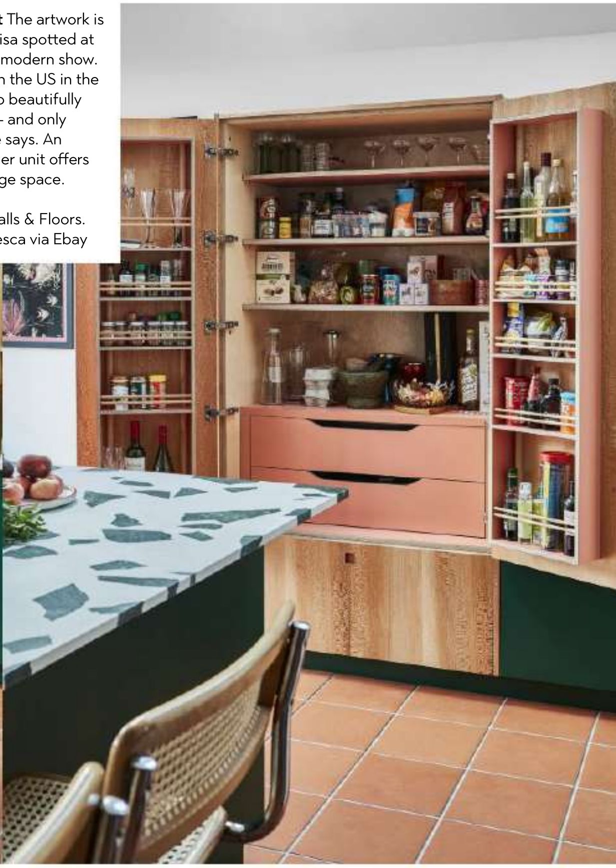
Terrazzo ***worktop***, Altrock Surfaces. For similar ***signs***, try Etsy. For a similar ***bench***, try Wayfair

Costs & contacts

Build cost and professional fees £94,000
Units £18,800
Glazing (kitchen and porch) £15,000
Appliances £3,756
Worktops £3,000
Flooring £800
Sink and tap £588
Wall tiles £375

Kitchen Pluck, 020 7095 1795, pluck.kitchen
Windows and doors Newlite, 01424 539553, newlitehome.co.uk





Left and right The artwork is wallpaper Louisa spotted at a mid-century modern show. ‘It was made in the US in the 1930s and is so beautifully hand-printed – and only £50 each!’ she says. An expansive larder unit offers valuable storage space.

Floor tiles, Walls & Floors.
Bar stools, Cesca via Ebay

STEP THREE

3

LOCALLY MADE

‘It was important to me to work with people we knew. I went to university with a director of the kitchen company Pluck and always wanted to support them; the maker of the terrazzo worktop was a client when I ran Clerkenwell Design Week. They’re both London-based businesses so are part of our local designer-maker community.

‘We found builders through a friend of mine. We went away for a week to Spain and they’d set up a mock kitchen in the dining room by the time we came home. We had no running water for a few months and were going up and down stairs to fill up bottles of water for drinking. You get on with it because the end result is going to be worth it.’

STEP FOUR

4

DESIGN DETAILS

‘I loved the idea of dark colours for the units – but being left field, I wanted green rather than blue. We found old 15x15cm quarry tiles when we ripped up the kitchen floor and decided we’d do a modern twist on them, so I searched high and low to find larger 30cm ones.

‘I was bored of metro tiles and wanted something different for the splashback surround, which is when I came across the mermaid tiles. They add a bit of pattern, but by using a plain colour we’ve given them longevity. Our builder took three days to install them and all you heard were swear words – he had to hand-glue each one by eye. He cut them so perfectly they look like they bend around the corners.’

STEP FIVE

5

CAREFUL CURATION

‘Cupboards above work surfaces don’t do for me – being short, I’d have to get the ladder out. That’s why we went heavy on drawers under the island with floating shelves above the worktops. We store everyday things like tea, coffee and dinner plates, but they’re also good for displaying art, plants and ceramics.

‘The light took six solid months of research. I stumbled across a collection by Michael Anastassiades for Flos when I was at Milan Furniture Fair, then found a website in the UK discounting them.

‘We’ve doubled the size of the kitchen, and we love the result – though we recommend our friends find the budget to stay elsewhere if they ever take on a project like this!’

COMING NEXT MONTH

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REAL HOMES

ON SALE 4 NOVEMBER

PHOTOGRAPH **DAVID GILES**

Inspiring real homes dressed up for Christmas

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Get entertaining-ready with guest bedroom ideas and show-stopping table settings

And more! Style tips, festive trends and best buys

Create a stunning project with glazing to impress

Express Bi-folding Doors has the expertise to help make homes that deliver the wow factor

Express Bi-folding Doors (EBD) is one of the UK's leading specialist manufacturers of aluminium bi-folding doors, in-line sliding doors, windows and roofing systems.

Experience is key in why customers choose Express to help them complete thousands of installations across the whole of the UK for a variety of properties, including stunning residential and new build projects, and prestigious commercial developments.

TRADITIONAL PROPERTY TRANSFORMED

The company is the first port of call for homeowners who want to update their homes with some impressive new glazing. A prime example is this traditional detached property in Surrey. The owners wanted to refresh its look by replacing their existing timber windows and doors, as well as upgrading an old conservatory to include a pitched roof extension that created an open-plan kitchen and dining area that connected with the large rear garden. With these plans in place, the homeowners visited Express' Surrey showroom in Redhill to look at the products there and discuss their project with the experienced sales team.

Starting with new EBD aluminium scenic casement windows around the house that boast design accreditations and superb thermal performance, they continued the modern feel with a classy 'Caverro-style' front door that provides the perfect welcome. Towards the rear of the home, Express installed a bespoke combination of single, French doors and XP view bi-folding doors to bring their vision to life with stunning effect.

Finally, the home's contemporary twist was topped off with electronically operated integral blinds– perfect for bi-folding doors as they can fold away and never require cleaning.

DESIGNING A DREAM HOME

As a nationwide company, Express also services projects at the other end of the country. In Huddersfield, ambitious homeowners visited the flagship Leeds showroom with aspirations of building their dream home from scratch after purchasing a plot of land.

Looking to create a bold aesthetic from both inside and outside of the house, they wanted full-height glazing in the rear rooms, with open-plan flexible spaces that allowed for indoor and outdoor living throughout the year.

In order to achieve this, Express provided expertise throughout the buying process and had a surveyor

Left and far left
New glazing front and back, plus a new extension, has updated this traditional property

Right and below
Built from scratch, this dream home has glazing that maximises the link between indoor and outdoor living

on site working with the skilled contractors to ensure the build, the glazing products and ultimately the house were all finished to an exceptionally high standard.

Once again, XP View bi-folding doors were used in this home, opening effortlessly for a seamless transition from inside to out, and offering maximum light and views out to the garden from the open-plan kitchen, dining area and living room.

A centrepiece oriel window was installed using a structural bond for the glass-to-glass corners rather than a traditional pay poled window system. This unique frameless feature window looks beautiful and is perfectly placed, sitting between the two ground-level bi-folding doors.

Whether you're looking for a quote, have questions about Express products, or are seeking information about glazing solutions, go to **expressbifolds.co.uk** for details or call 0800 121 4809. Find a showroom to visit at **expressbifolds.co.uk/the-express-difference/our-showrooms/**

express
bi-folding doors

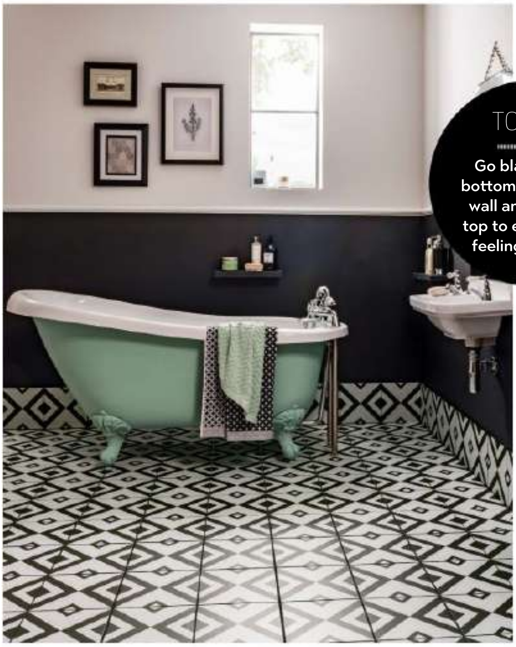
Black and white bathrooms

Combine light and dark with this classic combo for a time-defying look that's sleek and elegant

Black and white is a timeless pairing and the perfect colour scheme for any bathroom – be it a contemporary or traditional style space. While black reflects light, white absorbs it, meaning that the opposite shades balance each other out for a look that's visually and scientifically easy on the eye. Working with a set colour scheme means you can go experimental with shape and form – be it patterned tiles, statement shower screens, or even printed wallpaper. If monochrome is too bold for you, you can soften the look with a splash of colour. Whatever size your space, we've compiled some key ways to make monochrome work for your bathroom.

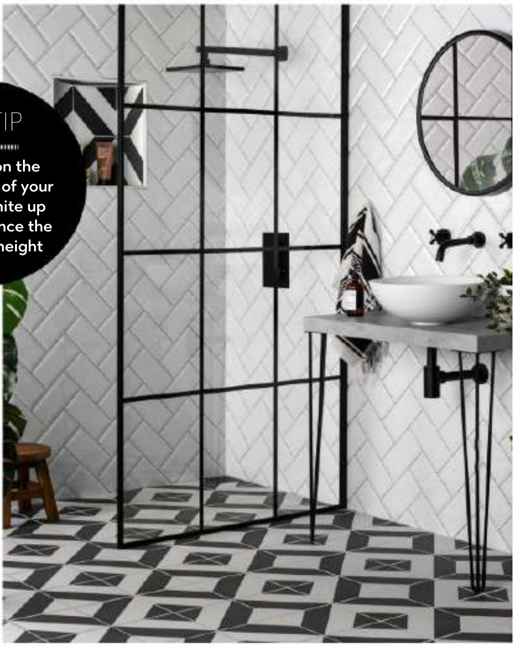
TOP TIP

Go black on the bottom half of your wall and white up top to enhance the feeling of height



POP OF COLOUR

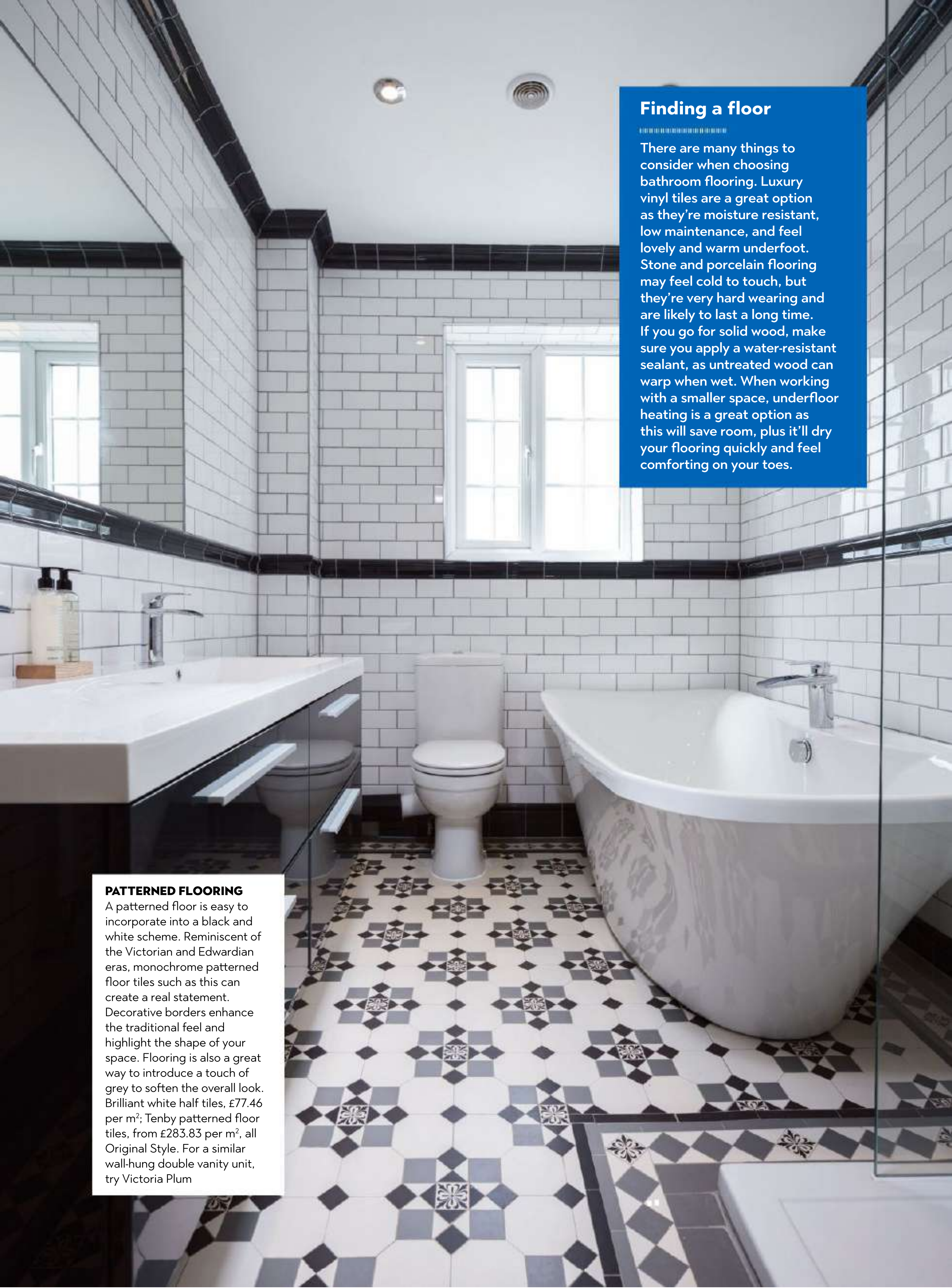
There's no need to stick to black and white throughout your entire space: you can liven up your bathroom with a pop of brightness. The benefit of a monochrome scheme is that literally any colour suits. This pastel green roll-top bath creates a real centrepiece, and you can draw the scheme together with a bath mat or towel in the same hue. Brixton tile, £49.98 per m^2, Topps Tiles. For a similar bath, try The Cast Iron Bath Company



CRITTALL SCREENS

Particularly popular in monochrome bathrooms, Crittall-style shower screens bring a cool, industrial edge. The matt black of the Crittall framing stands loud and proud against glossy white tiles, turning a practical barrier into a statement design feature and focal point of the room. Whitechapel gloss white metro tiles, £10.95 per m^2, Walls & Floors. For a similar shower screen, try Victorian Plumbing

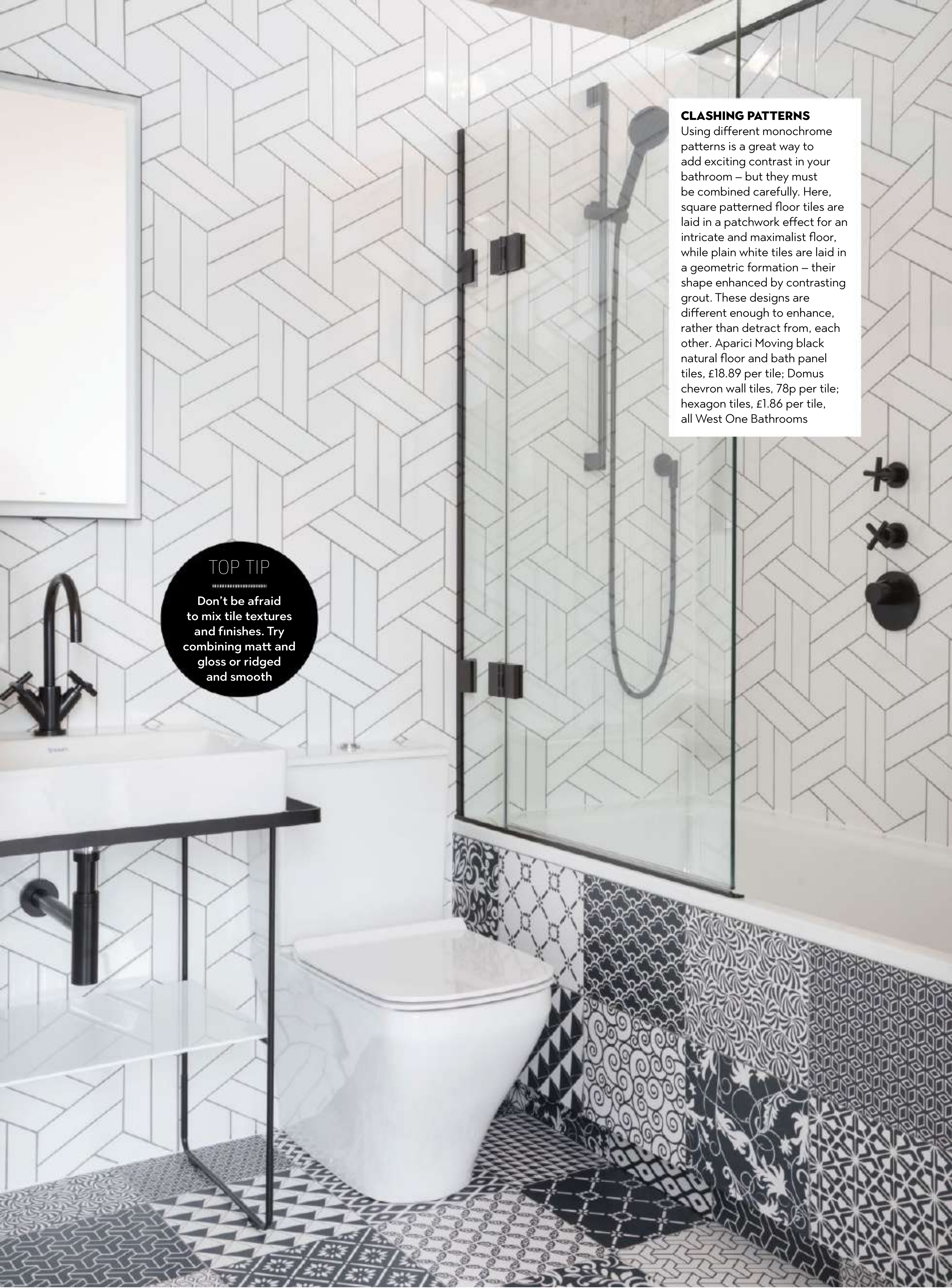
FEATURE **TALLULAH RUSHAYA**



Finding a floor

There are many things to consider when choosing bathroom flooring. Luxury vinyl tiles are a great option as they're moisture resistant, low maintenance, and feel lovely and warm underfoot. Stone and porcelain flooring may feel cold to touch, but they're very hard wearing and are likely to last a long time. If you go for solid wood, make sure you apply a water-resistant sealant, as untreated wood can warp when wet. When working with a smaller space, underfloor heating is a great option as this will save room, plus it'll dry your flooring quickly and feel comforting on your toes.

PATTERNED FLOORING
A patterned floor is easy to incorporate into a black and white scheme. Reminiscent of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, monochrome patterned floor tiles such as this can create a real statement. Decorative borders enhance the traditional feel and highlight the shape of your space. Flooring is also a great way to introduce a touch of grey to soften the overall look. Brilliant white half tiles, £77.46 per m^2; Tenby patterned floor tiles, from £283.83 per m^2, all Original Style. For a similar wall-hung double vanity unit, try Victoria Plum



CLASHING PATTERNS
Using different monochrome patterns is a great way to add exciting contrast in your bathroom – but they must be combined carefully. Here, square patterned floor tiles are laid in a patchwork effect for an intricate and maximalist floor, while plain white tiles are laid in a geometric formation – their shape enhanced by contrasting grout. These designs are different enough to enhance, rather than detract from, each other. Aparici Moving black natural floor and bath panel tiles, £18.89 per tile; Domus chevron wall tiles, 78p per tile; hexagon tiles, £1.86 per tile, all West One Bathrooms

TOP TIP

Don't be afraid to mix tile textures and finishes. Try combining matt and gloss or ridged and smooth

WORK YOUR WALLPAPER

Don't be afraid to use wallpaper in your bathroom. As long as you avoid putting it too close to splash zones and apply a waterproof sealant to protect from humidity, most wallpapers will withstand the high moisture levels of bathrooms. With a nod to living areas, wallpaper brings a homely feel to a space, for a room you'll want to spend time in. Graham & Brown Contour Antibac Grecian wallpaper, £16.99, Dulux Decorator Centre

TOP TIP

Wall panelling adds character and depth while protecting your wall from humidity and splashes

INDUSTRIAL TWIST

Adding industrial finishes is a great way to complete the monochrome look. Contemporary matt black wall lights like this are perfect for framing the vanity area and creating a perfectly symmetrical space. From metallic pendant lights to matt black towel radiators and even brushed brass taps, industrial touches bring depth, character and personality. Bermuda vanity with marble top and basin, £639.99, Bathroom Mountain

TOP TIP

A glass room divider defines zones and prevents splashes without blocking light

TACTILE TEXTURE

The earthy tones of wood can bring warmth to a monochrome scheme. Whatever shade you choose, be it pale oak or rich walnut, and whatever material you go for – from solid wood to engineered or laminate wood-effect – wood brings texture, which can soften a monochrome palette. Combine it with a patterned tile like this to zone your space, creating a clear bathing zone and a designated getting-ready space, all in the same room. Stonehouse vanity unit with integrated basin in gloss white, £698; Sandhurst freestanding acrylic bath, £1,496, Easy Bathrooms

Accessorise

Finding ways to accessorise your monochrome bathroom can enhance and show off your personal interior style. An easy way you can add creative flair is through framed prints. Whether you prefer floral, abstract or minimalist prints, there are a range of options to suit any monochrome design. Go for a black or white frame to tie the piece into the monochrome scheme. Creating a gallery wall, from a quartet or a mixture of sizes, can make a room cosier and beckon you to spend more time in there. From flowers in decorative, shapely vases to metallic cabinet handles and coloured soap dispensers, the finishing touches really can make all the difference in creating a monochrome bathroom that feels warm and inviting, rather than cold and clinical.

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A GUIDE TO

Radiators

Stay cosy in style with a radiator that will warm your room and look good doing it

Ancona horizontal bench seat, from £1,465.20, The Radiator Company

Ellen's top tip

Modern glazing means you no longer need to position radiators under a window to counteract draughts. Instead, try a flexible, space-saving alternative. Slimline horizontal radiators run along the smallest of spaces, while vertical radiators can sit in an alcove. Choose a wall made from masonry, brick or block as studwork walls can limit the size and shape of a radiator. You'll need to pay extra for pipework if you're repositioning.

An often overlooked element of our interiors, radiators are a key part of a room. Not just because they provide us with heat, though that's their most important job: they also need to blend in with our scheme and fit around our furniture and fittings. All of this makes choosing a new one, whether to replace an outdated existing model or to warm up a new room, a tricky job. There's lots to think about, from the type of radiator – plumbed-in or electric? – to the style, size and shape.

Luckily, it doesn't have to be a total headache. So many options on the market means that it's easier than it's ever been to choose a model that's right for your space – and your budget. If you're looking on the cheaper end of the spectrum and replacing an existing radiator, you're going to want to stick with your current position. You may even consider simply repainting the one you already have, if you're happy with the shape, size and heat output (scan the QR code over the page for our full how-to). Got a bit more money to spare? The sky's the limit when it comes to design – there are even Wi-Fi-controllable options if you want to get really hi-tech. Whatever you're after, our guide is here to help you understand what's out there right now.

TOP TIP

MATERIAL MATTERS

Most modern radiators are made from durable stainless steel. With a high heat output and efficiency, it's often seen as a budget-friendly option. If you have a period home or an industrial-style scheme, you may wish to opt for a cast-iron radiator, which is slower to heat but stays warm for longer. Aluminium is a light alternative that heats up and cools down quickly.

Milano Aruba yellow horizontal double panel designer radiator, from £239.95 incl. VAT for H400xW595mm, Best Heating

Need to know

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

According to Checkatrade, the average cost to replace a radiator is around £200 for a double panel, based on labour costs. However, if the job requires extra pipework or more people to handle a larger radiator, this will go up. On top of that, factor in the actual cost of your new radiator.

WHAT TYPES OF RADIATORS ARE THERE?

Most radiators are one of three types:

- Plumbed-in radiators use hot water created by a boiler to generate heat. They're controlled as part of the central heating system.
- Electric radiators use mains electricity to generate heat, so they work in individual rooms rather than as part of a central system. Depending on whether yours plugs into a socket or not, you may need it to be fitted by an electrician.
- Infrared electric radiators are similar to normal electric radiators, but with a high heat output and a slimline design – perfect for small spaces.

WHAT SIZE RADIATOR SHOULD I CHOOSE?

To get the right size for your space, you'll have to calculate the optimum heat output in British Thermal Units (BTUs). Use The Radiator Company's calculator to find out what you need, or call in the help of a heating technician.

Sierra DR040 towel warmer, from £315.60 incl. VAT, Vogue UK

Nelson triple radiator, from £367.99 for H1500x W291xD100mm, Bayswater Bathrooms

Athens Dove Grey triple column horizontal traditional radiator, H600xW1190mm, £319, Bathroom Mountain

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Terma Rolo room vertical electric designer radiator in Quartz Mocha, H1800xW370mm, £479, B&Q

TOP TIP

CHOOSE YOUR SHAPE
Horizontal radiators are most common as they fit under windows and wall shelving, so can be space efficient. Vertical radiators are great in small rooms or narrow spaces and make quite the feature. Column radiators have vertical pipes that can be set two, three or four columns deep. Towel radiators are a bathroom classic for warming both the room and your towels.

Below Victorian three-column cast-iron radiator, £312.34 for nine-section in a painted finish, Carron

TOP TIP

RADIATOR VALVES
Valves control the temperature of individual radiators. Manual ones can be adjusted by hand and allow a constant flow of water into the radiator. Thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) do this, but also regulate heat output, automatically reducing the flow if the room gets too hot. Styles include traditional chrome, brass, or matt black.

Ultraheat Porte aluminium horizontal radiator in wood effect, from £162 for H600xW278mm, Just Radiators

See our full guide to painting a radiator here

FEATURE **ELLEN FINCH**

Work surfaces

Kitchen worktops have a starring role in your space while being its best supporting feature. Read on for the best designs and buying advice

BEST FOR VERSATILITY ▼
Porcelain is a popular choice for wall and floor tiles, but the durable material also works well as a work surface. Hard-wearing porcelain can deliver the style of a stone worktop but is a more affordable, low-maintenance alternative. These Blue Savoy tiles were inspired by a bluish-grey stone quarried in the French Alps. A 60x120cm tile is £55, Real Stone & Tile

◀ BEST FOR A HIGH-END FEEL
Marble has a timeless beauty that can last for years – if it's well cared for. It comes in a range of colours and patterns with subtle to complex veining. A pricier choice, it is susceptible to small scratches and staining, but it can be treated with a poultice and repolished to get the best from your investment. Arabescato Orobico marble, from £240 per m^2, Cullifords

▶ BEST FOR SEAMLESS STYLE
Add colour to your contemporary kitchen with a smooth surface in a rich matt hue. FENIX is an innovative material made from acrylic resins cured using an electron beam for an ultra-matt effect with soft-touch feel. Anti-fingerprint and low-maintenance, it is scratch resistant with thermohealing of slight microscratches possible. FENIX worktop measuring from 3000x 635x39mm, starts at £295, Worktop Express

THREE TOP TIPS *for picking a surface to suit your pocket and your kitchen style*

BUY THE BEST
Worktops can add real style to your kitchen. If you're watching the budget you can buy cost-effective units but top with a high-end surface. To protect from the cuts and dings of food prep when installed, the fitter will usually be able to provide you with matching off cuts as chopping boards, or you can contrast with wooden ones. Use a trivet to support hot pans.

CREATE YOUR OWN
For a modern urban style, consider a concrete worktop. Sleek and minimalist, it can be moulded into the shape you need. It's strong, and although it can crack, it can be easily repaired. It's porous but a sealant will prevent the worst of the stains. If you're confident with your DIY skills, you can try pouring your own.

MIX IT UP
Worktop thicknesses vary between about 20-40mm depending on material. A slim surface gives a crisp, modern aesthetic while a work surface of 30mm or more can support more weight (though a thicker worktop is heavier so could affect how easy it is to install). Try varying styles with a thinner profile over a run of cabinets and thicker on an island.

FEATURE **ALISON JONES**

▼ BEST FOR BUDGET
Laminate is an affordable option that offers an array of choice as it can resemble so many other surfaces. It is low-maintenance and hygienic, and choosing a gloss surface will give a luxury look. If it becomes scratched, stained or porous over time, it can be easily replaced and updated. Chalet Oak laminate worktop, 3000x600X38mm, £130, Wickes

▲ BEST FOR DURABILITY
Quartz is probably the most obvious stand-in for real stone, as it's a man-made material mixed with a natural component – like quartz aggregate. Resembling granite or marble, it's a more stable surface as it's easy to clean, unlikely to discolour or crack and has improved resistance to temperature changes – perfect in a busy kitchen. Lucern Lake Quartz priced from £280 per m^2, Radianz

▶ BEST FOR A CHEF'S KITCHEN
For the sleekest looking surface, stainless steel has a professional edge. It offers an urban industrial feel but is eminently practical; just wipe it down and dry off to maintain its patina. Any small scratches can be seen as adding character. Its antibacterial properties repel all sorts of germs. Stainless steel work surface, POA, Franke

◀ BEST FOR A RUSTIC LOOK
A solid timber worktop can create a classic country feel to a kitchen and add warmth with its variety of grains and shades. Wood requires maintenance, but some surfaces do come pre-oiled for protection. In the long-term, sanding and re-oiling will keep it looking new. Dunham Sky kitchen with solid oak oil-finished worktop, £4,001, Magnet

TRENDS ON TOP

Kam Bharadwa, sales and operations manager at uk.kutchenhaus.com, on choosing and caring for your work surfaces

LAMINATE WORKTOPS

Laminate worktops are budget-friendly options but offer many design choices – get the style right and your kitchen can look incredible. They are hard-wearing and low maintenance, but can be damaged by water ingress as they have a chipboard substrate, while too-hot pans can also mark them.

SOLID WOOD WORKTOPS

A wooden worktop feels rustic and homely. It changes colour subtly with age or if you apply different oils. Wood needs upkeep, so it's recommended to oil it every six months (your supplier or fabricator can recommend which oil to use). This will keep your worktops water-resistant, hygienic and will prevent stains or watermarks forming.

GRANITE WORKTOPS

Granite is a natural stone; it's tough and each piece is unique. A slightly more expensive choice, granite has high heat resistance and is highly scratch resistant. Clean with a damp cloth and mild detergent. Avoid exposing it to citrus and acidic foods and solvent-based liquids. Granite worktops usually come sealed when installed, but should be resealed every year as they're porous.

QUARTZ WORKTOPS

Quartz is an engineered stone worktop with designs to suit all tastes and budgets. It is highly durable, non-porous and scratch resistant. As it's not natural stone and is mixed with a resin, avoid harsh chemicals when cleaning; use water and a mild detergent.

CERAMIC WORKTOPS

Ceramic offers a huge range of styles, is scratch resistant and easy to clean. However, porcelain is more susceptible to chips and breaks than others. It can also be one of the more expensive options, so the choice will depend on your budget.

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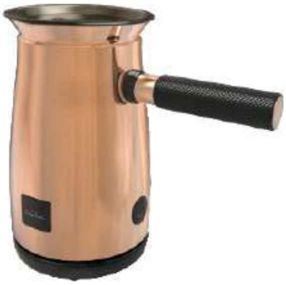

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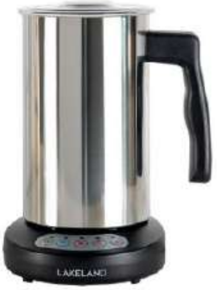

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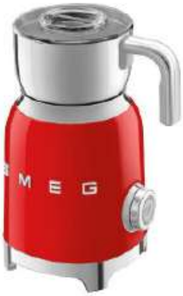

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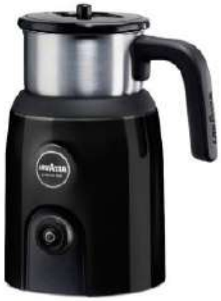
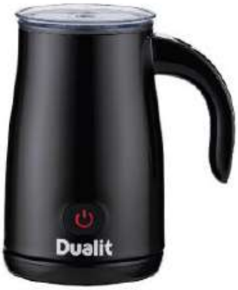


Hot chocolate weather

DON'T FORGET...
A mug (and marshmallows)

Personalised Rowan cocoa mug, £23.95, Emma Bridgewater

5



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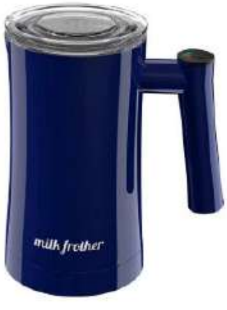
milk frother

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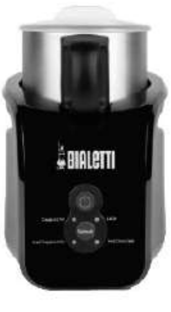

1 Velvetiser, £99.95, Hotel Chocolat
2 Milk frother and hot chocolate maker, £49.99, Lakeland
3 Milk frother, £159.95, Smeg
4 Lavazza milk frother, £59, Knoops
5 Milk frother, £55, Dualit
6 Milk frother and steamer, £35.99, Amazon
7 Bialetti milk frother and hot chocolate maker, £80, Whittard

NEXT MONTH: SLOW COOKERS FOR LOW-MAINTENANCE WINTER MEALS

FEATURE **AMELIA SMITH**

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THE EDIT

Statement basins

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100%
RECYCLABLE

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4

5

6

7

8

1 Miena steel enamel wash bowl in mint, £465, Kaldewei
2 Nero stone basin, £320, Indigenous
3 Nyla basin, £410, The Way We Live London
4 The Soft Rectangle concrete sink, £650, Smith & Goat
5 Orange cylindrical basin, £280, Lovasi International
6 Barcelona 55 painted basin in gloss, £870, Victoria + Albert Baths
7 Plural countertop basin in matt Terra Rossa, £444, Vitra
8 Celestine basin, £849, The London Basin Company

NEXT MONTH: GET CREATIVE WITH THE LATEST LAYOUTS FOR METRO TILES

FEATURE AMELIA SMITH

THE EDIT

Leaf blowers

Use a handy garden helper to huff and puff away the winter blues and those lawn-damaging, slippery fallen leaves

Black + Decker electric leaf vacuum, mains powered, £75, ao.com

Grizzly ELS 3017-E electric leaf vacuum/blower, £107.78, Garden Street

Cordless leaf blower with turbo fan, £499.99, Gtech

LBL 2 cordless leaf blower (battery set), £149.99, Karcher

BGA 57 lightweight AK System cordless blower, from £119, Stihl

3-in-1 leaf blower, vacuum and mulcher, £42.99, VonHaus

REVIEW CORNER

DEWALT
BRUSHLESS

Best leaf blower

Kicking through fallen leaves might be a source of childish delight in autumn, but gardeners know lawns will pay the price if the golden brown carpet is left to rot. The Dewalt DCM572 Flexvolt Blower is one of the most efficient for effortlessly clearing them off. A top-of-the-range leaf blower, it has a 195 km/h speed motor that can tackle a medium to large sized garden in a short space of time. One of the lighter weight models, it's easy on the arms, and thanks to the electric motor, the sound of it won't disturb the tranquillity of the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.

SPECIFICATIONS

Best for: Efficiency
Cordless: Yes
Weight: 3.33kg
Maximum speed: 195 km/h
RRP: £179.99, Amazon

REASONS TO BUY

- Fairly lightweight
- Interchangeable batteries

REASONS TO AVOID

- Run time is only 15 minutes

FEATURE **ALISON JONES**

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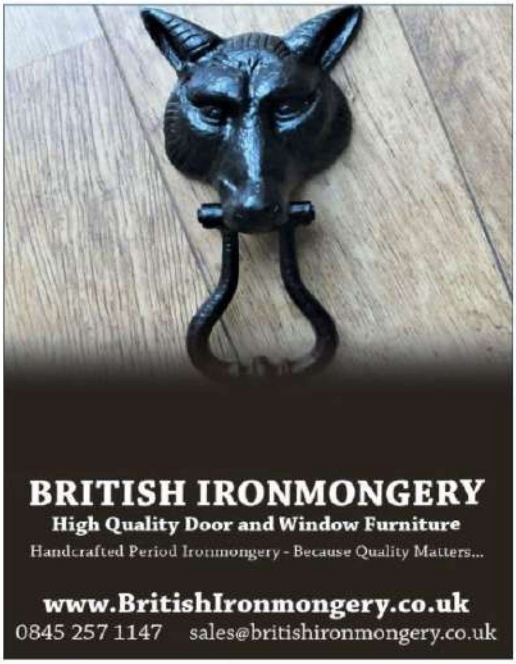

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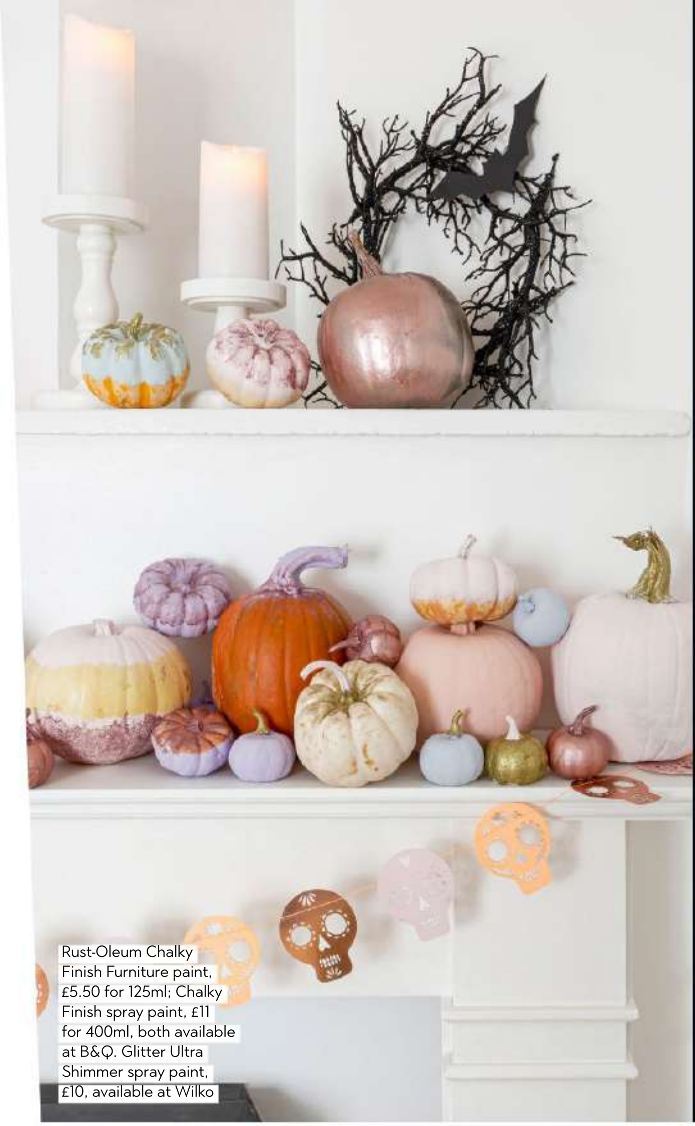
SUNDAY project

Stuck for ideas this weekend? Get your DIY fix and delve right in with our quick and easy ways to update your home for less



Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish Furniture paint, £5.50 for 125ml; Chalky Finish spray paint, £11 for 400ml, both available at B&Q. Glitter Ultra Shimmer spray paint, £10, available at Wilko

WORDS **ELLEN FINCH** PHOTOGRAPH **RUST-OLEUM**

Gourd of honour

Love Halloween but not so keen on the messy pumpkin-carving bit? We're here to tell you there's another way. Instead of hollowing yours out this year and being left with pumpkin innards to deal with, why not try painting it instead? We've taken inspiration from the creative people over at Rust-Oleum (makeityours.co.uk), who've created this dreamy pumpkin and pastel-coloured set-up worthy of any time of year, let alone Halloween. Follow their steps, and show us your creations over on Instagram with the hashtag #sorealhomes – we'd love to see what you come up with!

You'll need:

- Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish Furniture paint
- Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish spray paint
- Rust-Oleum Glitter paint
- Newspaper

Method:

1. Wash your pumpkins thoroughly with a cloth and some warm water to remove dirt. Allow the pumpkins to dry fully.
2. Paint the top half of your pumpkin with Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish Furniture paint in a shade of your choice. Leave the layer to dry.
3. Place your pumpkin on a piece of newspaper in a well-ventilated area and spray the unpainted half with Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish spray paint to create an ombre effect. Leave to dry.
4. Apply Rust-Oleum Glitter paint to the painted surface for extra sparkle. Rust-Oleum have created a little glitter frosting here, but you could add polka dots, stripes or paint the whole pumpkin.
5. Sit back and enjoy your handiwork!

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